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THE ATONEMENT

ITS RELATION TO PARDON

E. MELLOR, M. A.



The Atonement,
ITS RELATION TO PARDON:

AN
ARGUMENT AND A DEFENCE.

BY THE
REV. E. MELLOR, M.A.



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PREFACE.

THE ARGUMENT, which constitutes the first part of this Book, was read before the Congregational Union of the West Riding of Yorkshire in the spring of 1858. It was of course never designed to be exhaustive. Its appearance, in its present form, in connexion with a defensive Appendix, is owing to the publication of three Discourses which were delivered in reply by the Rev. T. Hincks, B.A., Unitarian Minister of Leeds. If the interests of Divine truth are advanced by a controversy which the Author has not courted, but dare not shun, he will be satisfied.

HALIFAX, *August* 1859.



The Atonement ;

ITS RELATION TO PARDON.

I AM not quite sure that I have rightly understood the precise idea of those through whose kindness I find myself in this position to-day. The subject on which I was requested to prepare a paper for this, our annual gathering, was conveyed to me in this broad and naked form—Sacrifice,—and for a while I was not unnaturally thrown into considerable bewilderment. Was I intended to bring before you an elaborate investigation into the origin of Sacrifice, with the view of adjusting the claims of rival theories which assert it respectively to be from heaven or of men, and to trace its various modifications among the different nations and tribes of the earth? Or was I to enter into a philosophical examination of the principle of Sacrifice, and attempt a decisive adjudication between the opinions, (if, indeed, their nebulous consistence entitles them to so positive a denomination) of what are styled the advanced school, and the more tangible opinions of those who still “stand in the way and seek for the old paths?” Or was I to present a critical history of the controversy so far as the accessible materials for such a history are sufficiently numerous and exact to warrant the attempt? Or was I to confine myself to the simple object of defending the real, piacular, substitutionary character of the Saviour’s death, from those recent attacks which, with much mysticism, have sought to accomplish the end which a more honest and plain-

speaking Unitarianism has abortively contemplated for centuries? Such was my perplexity, and it was only after prolonged and prayerful consideration that I determined,—without selecting any one of these topics for exclusive and systematic treatment, and thus being seduced into the composition of a lengthened treatise instead of a brief paper,—to bring as far as possible into one view the miscellaneous arguments by which, in my judgment, the death of Christ is avouched to be a real and not a figurative, a divinely intended and not a casual, a vicarious and atoning, and not merely nor chiefly an exemplary and an attesting death.

I am not insensible to the disadvantages connected with such a decision. It sacrifices to a considerable extent that unity which is no mean charm in any production. It bars also thorough exhaustiveness of treatment, and consequently leaves out of account both some objections to the truth and the arguments by which they may be met. But no decision could, in the circumstances, have combined all advantages without any drawback ; and, unless I greatly misinterpret the spirit and convictions of my brethren, they will find in the aspect of the times ample justification of the form which this paper assumes. Unity of one kind it *will* possess. Its *object* is one, and that is to indicate both by considerations familiar, and by considerations less trite, but of immense and, I believe, conclusive value—the redemptiveness of our Saviour's death. And if the object is one, so too is the *spirit* in which I write, for words can but feebly embody my desire that we may all be mercifully preserved from false and shadowy apprehensions of this fundamental doctrine. For apprehensions such as these cannot fail (such is the constitution of the human mind) to thaw down the sinews of all earnestness, to make the lan-

guage of Scripture, if we use it, a mere jugglery on our lips, to dwarf into comparative unimportance every other vital doctrine, and to alienate so fearfully from our work the Spirit of God, that there will neither be heard in our churches the cry of sinners for salvation, nor the song of the saints on their pilgrimage to heaven.

There is a wonderful confraternity in error, because there is a wonderful unity in truth, and hence it is that when a man rejects a central and controlling verity he cannot long (except by a strange inconsistency) maintain his faith in other and related truths. He has thrown one truth away, and then those which lay next to it, which were fitted into it, are seen to have significant shapes which have no meaning, unless they are attached to the rejected truth, and as that is gone, they too must go. But still the process of abnegation is not ended, for other truths remain to be accounted for. *They* indicate by *their* forms that they are but parts of a great whole, but as the most important part of that whole has been flung away, it is inconvenient to retain them, and thus quickly or slowly, according to the rapidity with which the man sees the logical consequences of his position, he becomes the victim of universal scepticism. These remarks have peculiar force in their application to truths of a spiritual character, and which bear upon the heart, for in such a case they have to encounter a depraved opposition which feels a special interest in closing the door against every doctrine which tends to humble the pride and self-sufficiency of man. The doctrine, then, to the elucidation and enforcement of which the present paper is devoted, is not of a secondary and unimportant character. Nor is it a matter so purely speculative that it exerts no influence on our life and destiny. And as little is it a

truth which has no traceable articulations with other truths revealed in Scripture. It is the most prominent doctrine of the Bible. It is the central truth, the denial of which throws the whole fabric of spiritual truth into disintegration and collapse.* It sustains the functions of the heart to every other verity in the Christian scheme, giving to it life and power. It is the sun in the heavens of revelation, around which other doctrines revolve, and from which they derive their light. If God has not revealed this fact—that we are saved through the substitutionary work of Christ—he has revealed nothing, or the revelation has been clothed in such deceptive language as to necessitate bewilderment and mistake, and that which should have been a steady lamp to our feet and light to our path, only leads us, like an *ignis fatuus*, into quagmires of error and despair. The great Reformer styled the doctrine of Justification by faith the article of a standing or a falling Church. If one may vary and extend his figure, justification and sanctification are the two glorious pillars which stand at the entrance of Heaven, but the atoning death of Christ is the foundation on which both, and both equally, rest. Without this they stand on air. They are empty theories, about which men may speak, but which can never come into actual existence in a world of sin. The Divine philosophy of the Word of God is this,—without redemption there is no forgiveness, without forgiveness there is no sanctification of character and life, for there is no root of gratitude from which it can grow.

The first argument we shall present with the view of establishing what I do not shrink from characterising as the orthodox notion of the Scripture doctrine of sacrifice

* See note (A) Appendix.

shall be based on the phenomena of human consciousness. It has been greatly the fashion of recent years to insist upon a theology which shall be in harmony with the principles of human nature, and which shall commend itself by its obvious accordance with the anticipations of that nature. Equally has it been the fashion to denounce as false, the theology which we hold in common because of its alleged antagonism to the instincts and unsophisticated judgments of the soul. Names of I know not what variety and severity of denunciation have been hurled at every scheme which has admitted to any appreciable extent the doctrine of a real substitution. It has been called "bloody," "inhuman," and "diabolic." So noisy for a season were the outcries against it, that it is to be feared that some suppressed it in their preaching, or wrapped it in such a profusion of gaudy decorations that it was scarcely visible, and that this was done lest they should be stigmatised as the ignorant adherents of an old and exploded theology. The age had now arrived for a new faith, which should not flout, but follow the "primordial principles," the "intuitional consciousness," the "inborn revelation of the inner man." We were authoritatively told in books that a book was not to be our authority, and that we needed no other light on religious matters than that which we carry within us; though these very men, with a truly miraculous consistency, kindled an exterior supplementary light to show us the light they had declared to be abundantly sufficient. But this is not the time to pursue a general criticism of the miserable and suicidal tactics of a school now happily falling into disrepute. They have appealed to human consciousness with reference to the doctrine of atonement, and we are prepared to abide

the issue of that appeal.* Fallen as man is, we believe that many of his experiences are wonderfully significant and true. The soul does not always lie. If it be "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," there are times and seasons in which there come up from its depths cries and confessions that are as true as the oracles of God. If it has its passions which sympathise with evil, it has its conscience which sides with good. If it has its hours in which it abandons itself to lawless revel, it has its hours too in which that revel is brought to judgment and condemned. It is because we believe that the consciousness of man is not, in its manifold experiences, all a lie; it is because we believe that it announces at times startling and alarming truths; it is because we believe that the provisions of the Gospel have been determined in their nature and variety by special necessities, whether felt or unfelt, of the soul; it is because we believe that there is a pre-established harmony between what we need and what God has provided for us, that we confidently engage in the inquiry—What does the soul itself say of the truths it requires to know before it will confess itself fully satisfied?

Let us then take the soul when it is in a condition most favourable for a fair and decisive experiment.† There is such a condition, just as there are corresponding conditions for every experiment in natural science, conditions which must be artificially created or calmly waited for. And the soul is then in a state most suitable for yielding a reliable result to a searching scrutiny when its passions are for the time in abeyance, whether from exhaustion, or the forcible ascendancy of the conscience and the will. The man is now "come to himself." The fever of his sinful

* See note (B) Appendix.

† See note (C) Appendix.

riot is over. It is the morning of reflection after a night of unhallowed carousal. The law of God in all its comprehensiveness of claim stands before him like a spectre. His sins start from the sepulchres in which they seemed for years to be buried, and now they crowd around him with a glaring vividness that blazes through every veil by which he seeks to blind his eyes. He is not deceiving himself, he is not under an uncontrollable illusion. They are *his* sins and not another's. He committed them in the perverse abuse of a freedom that was given him for holy obedience to the law. He has nothing to urge by way of inculcating the rigour of that law, or of palliating his own transgressions. He can bethink himself of no plea in arrest of judgment. So far from this, his sins acquire fresh aggravations as he gazes upon them, for he thinks of the infinite goodness of that God against whom he has rebelled, and who has entitled himself by His very nature, as well as by the blessings He has showered upon him, to his gratitude and unfailing service. He says *Amen* to the compendious form in which the law is presented when it demands, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." But in this he feels that he pronounces his own condemnation, and dooms himself to despair. He believes that God is infinitely holy; he believes that he requires a perfect obedience; he knows that such obedience he has not rendered, and he anticipates nothing but eternal death. In some instances, and those too, of the strongest minds that ever distinguished the Church of God, this consciousness of guilt has been so pungent and oppressive that it has, for a season, stolen the lustre from their eyes, and the bloom from their cheeks.

and the marrow from their bones, and elasticity from their step, and wasted their strength, and mingled tears with their food, and made them like the pelican in the wilderness, and—strange to say—long for death, yet dread the judgment that follows it. This severity of anguish does not mark the spiritual history of every Christian, because it is modified by a man's previous life, and peculiarities in the native structure of the soul. But there are few, indeed, that have not experienced it in some measure, and to whom it has not been as the first drop of the cup of wrath. This, you will mark, is what we denominate a sense of guilt into which enter these ingredients,—the apprehension of a holy and inflexible God, of a law which is the expression of His nature, of a free and wanton violation of that law, of a consequent amenableness to its penalty, and of utter inability by anything he can do to escape it. Canvass and question as you may the intrinsic propriety of the feeling, such is the feeling. It may be healthy or unhealthy, it may be intelligent or mistaken, it may be the product of superstitious misconceptions, or of just and sober apprehensions of truth ; such is the feeling as a fact in a man's spiritual life when he comes to think seriously on a course of sin. But if it be a fact, what is its value ? Is it entitled to any consideration, and, if so, to how much ? This inquiry now becomes of vital moment, for on the answer it receives depends the necessity or non-necessity for a vicarious atonement. Your fullest attention is solicited to the observations I have now to offer, as I am deeply convinced that in inadequate conceptions of *guilt*, and of the holiness of God (to which guilt is co-related), has originated the denial of the redemptive property of our Saviour's death.

Let us take an exemplary case, that of the Philippian jailor when in the moment of conviction he exclaimed "What must I do to be saved?" We assume that this cry was the agonised expression of guilt. Shall we now go to that man thus alarmed and oppressed, and attempt to soothe him with soft palliatives? Shall we assure him that his fears and his torturing convictions are wholly or even partially groundless—that he is exaggerating his transgressions—that he is far nearer to the standard of the law than he now morbidly deems himself—and shall we attempt this perilous process of giving peace in the face of the notorious fact that even the very holiest and least fanatical of men mourn daily that they appreciate so faintly and so feebly the *guilt* of their own sins? Shall we, finding that we cannot persuade him to take this moral chloroform by way of benumbing his thrilling and throbbing sensibilities, try still severer measures? Shall we allow him in the first place to take his own view of his guilt, as expressing his fearful defalcations of obedience, and then seek to persuade him that though it is quite true he is so guilty, yet his transgressions have not changed his position in the sight of God, nor changed God's position in relation to him. Shall we tell him that his sins have placed no legal barrier whatever between him and heaven, and that God can as honourably and as easily receive him to His bosom without any atonement as He could have done before he had sinned at all? Then what may he reply? He may say "strange indeed that I can trample on law, and be as safe as ever—that I can insult the God that gave the law, and connected with it a penalty, and, without any reparation of the injury, can stand on the same *legal* footing as if I were innocent—that I am so made as to feel

guilt, the finger of which is always pointing upwards to a punishment in reserve, and that without any rectifying transaction either by myself or a substitute, the punishment is remitted. If this be true, then my whole nature is a lie. It tortures me with false feelings. It afflicts me with a sense of guilt when there is no peril; and the law, instead of being imperative command, and absolute prescription, is but impotent counsel and advice, cloaked and masked in phrases of terror, but meaning nothing more serious than that it will be well for me to take its suggestions, and not ill even to decline them." And what, upon this principle, shall we think of God? Give me a thousand times a thorough-going atheism, before a doctrine like this, which belies the truest feelings of the soul, which converts the law into precepts without penalties, and which degrades the King of kings into the framer of a scheme of government which he never designs to support and honour. Be it observed that the point on which I am now laying emphatic stress, because it is vital to the whole argument, is this—that a sinner in the hours of calm reflection feels a sense of *guilt*, and that one of the essential properties of guilt in the subject of an honourable government, is the expectation of punishment. "I have sinned," is the conviction; "I shall suffer," is the consequent anticipation. And in the precise degree in which the sinner's conscience becomes quickened and sensitive, does his expectation of punishment become certain and alarming. He feels as if the bolt were already released from the Divine hand, and as if any moment it might smite him with eternal death. What means the all but universal prevalence of animal sacrifices, unless there lies at its root this sense of guilt? In the present stage of the

argument it is immaterial to enquire whether such a custom be "from heaven or of men,"—it is a custom running through all ages and almost all tribes, and its design is to avert the retributive vengeance of the gods. It may be, and is, a gross error to invest sacrifices with such persuasive efficacy, but the central fact still remains, that man is haunted with a sense of guilt, and feels, moreover, that the gods are entitled to some reparation, if the penalty is to be detached from the sin.

We are now in a position to consider in what ways it has been attempted to meet this consciousness of guilt, and quiet its fears and soothe its painfulness without having recourse to the atonement of Christ. The atheistic expedients may be passed over as foreign to our present purpose. When the existence of God is denied, and the soul is resolved into a product of organisation, all its operations or phenomena being amenable to the inflexible causality of material laws, it is clear that guilt becomes at one and the same time a nonentity and a mystery; a non-entity, because it could have no real existence on such conditions; a mystery, because it does exist, in spite of the conditions thus assumed. Men may seek to scare away the spectre of guilt by seeking to abolish a Deity and a responsible spirit, but it still haunts the hearts of men, and by haunting them inferentially establishes both the Being of a holy God, and of a sinful soul.

But there are others who abhor atheism as much as we, who claim indeed to belong to the most enlightened and liberal school of Christians, who admit the reality of guilt as a feeling, but who think that it can be adequately met and satisfied without the vicarious death of another.

I.

It is hinted in some quarters that penitence is a sufficient compensation and atonement for sin; that tears can wash away crimes; and that the sword of justice has only to see a transgressor bowing in contrition, than at once it slides back into its scabbard. But what says a man with a living and sensitive conscience to this? He says, "no law ever can prescribe penitence, or permit it as a compensation and satisfaction for sin, without ceasing to be law. The alternative which law presents, is 'obey or suffer'—not 'obey or weep.'" When contrition is allowed to fill up defalcations of obedience, then law becomes option, and a man may fairly choose his course, whether he will deny himself of guilty pleasures, or he will first enjoy them and then weep. Further, he says, that even human laws are executed with a religious uniformity, let the culprit afflict himself never so much with penitential grief. The dignity of justice, not less than the interests of society, demand that the magistrate shall not allow a penalty to be blown to the winds by the sighs of a criminal; and does less of sanctity pertain to the laws which have emanated from the Great White Throne? The principle of reparation by penitence is one which never satisfies conscience when fairly awoke, but the sinner still, like the jailor, frantically cries "What must I do to be saved?"

II.

Another nostrum for pacifying the sense of guilt is that of yielding a perfect obedience in future. But this is obnoxious to a double objection. It supposes that the law consents to its own dishonour by accepting a partial obedience; that failing to obtain all its just demands it is willing to palter and be satisfied with a composition; and,

further, it supposes that the sinner can hereafter rise up to the standard below which he has hitherto disgracefully fallen. But so far from this, even though his past transgressions could be equitably remitted, and he could start as it were anew, with no penalty hanging over his head, to talk of an infallible future obedience is the shallowest trifling. The man stumbles at his first step. He is conscious that he is destitute of the very principle of acceptable obedience—love to God. Every minute his arrears accumulate to a heap that appals him. So far from working off the debt of bygone years, his liabilities are ceaselessly augmenting. And this, be it observed, is no illusion. He knows that he is sinning, and he feels that to sin is to be guilty, and that to be guilty is to be exposed to a duly-measured retribution. And the more his conscience becomes enlightened, the thicker grow the bars in his cage of despair, and the more immovable is his conviction that nothing he can do will free him from his guilt, and the more piercing is his cry “What must I do to be saved?”

III.

It is just at this stage that many, feeling that the logical pressure of the argument shuts them up to the acknowledgment of the necessity for an atonement, seek to escape by the door of what we may style parental, or paternal prerogative.* They feel that the reasoning, so far as it proceeds on the demands of law is unanswerable, and they think they find in God's fatherly relationship to men, a deliverance from the unwelcome alternative of accepting a substitutionary Saviour. We will state their position fairly; and then attempt as fairly to reply. It is alleged that in every well-conducted family there are laws framed for the

* See note (D) Appendix.

control and education of the children. These laws emanate from the parent. They are accompanied in announcement, and as a rule, in fact, by wisely-considered and well-proportioned penalties. Disobedience is generally followed up by the threatened punishment, and must be, if the idea of domestic discipline is not to become a mere mockery, and even worse—an unbridled license to rebel. The regularity of the sequence between transgression and suffering must be such as to destroy effectually any possibility of the father's government being regarded by the children as the father's caprice. But then, it is contended that even in such a family, there is a margin left for the exercise of mercy. Law is not always enforced. There are seasons, when, without the compromise of his own word, and without opening a dangerous inlet to presumptuous trifling with his commands, the father may remit the punishment, and "spare the rod." That a sin against the laws of the house has been committed is allowed, that it is fairly deserving of chastisement is also allowed, but it is maintained that circumstances may exist which will not only justify, but more than justify the occasional forgiveness of the child. If, say the defenders of this analogical theory, it is all-important to maintain the dignity and sacredness of parental authority, that authority will be confirmed and enhanced by such forgiveness; for in the manifest, deep, and heartfelt sorrow of the child, is a sufficient pledge and guarantee that he will not abuse the clemency which saves him from the penalty he has provoked, and that he will even feel himself bound to obedience in future by a new and a stronger tie. Such is the case, as stated by the advocates of what we may term the paternal and unvicarious theory of forgiveness. The case, in itself, is not open to criticism.

It is fair and just. We are foremost to affirm that a domestic constitution which does not include some element of free and generous mercy, is unquestionably cruel. But when the case is converted into an analogy, and when it is transferred without any material modification or limitations to the Divine government, we must then protest on several grounds, each sufficient in itself, but all in combination forming, we are persuaded, an invulnerable reply. It is asked of the believers in an atonement, if an earthly parent who has given a law and threatened disobedience with punishment, may honourably and safely overlook a transgression, why the same thing is not possible with God. Is He less merciful than man? Is law with Him less flexible and more relentless, and may not the same beneficial results, from an occasional act of clemency on the part of God, flow to the sinner, which are known to flow to children from the well-timed pardon of some rebellious act?

In reply to this method of reasoning, we beg to suggest the following observations :

(1.) First, and *generally*; we dare not follow the vindicators of the theory we are now examining, in their familiarity with the character and plans of God. We tread on holy ground, when in speaking of Him we either venture to use language of an *a priori* nature, converting our narrow conceptions of likelihoods and possibilities into positive and dogmatic judgments; or, (what is hardly less presumptuous), make human actions the measure and model of the divine. I confess that I have a greater distrust than ever of all mere antecedent opinions, of conclusions that rest simply on anticipations that are framed independently of experience; and I have greater distrust than ever of such analogical reasoning as, by its very nature, cannot

collect a sufficient basis of resembling elements to support the fabric which men seek to rear upon it. If I find that God does not act in many things as I may think I should act were I in His position, why should I make my conduct as a father the type of His? God does not pursue the course we might expect Him in other relations, and why should He in this? If I may pay any implicit deference to my uninstructed notions, I wonder why there should be any sin at all, to say nothing of why there should be forgiveness of sin. As a member of the human family it is my duty to stay the hand which aims a murderous blow at a brother man, and it would be in me a crime to remain a passive and uninterfering spectator ; but can I forget that God sees all the murders and wrongs in the universe, and with omnipotence at His command, fails to prevent them. A human father would feel himself called upon forcibly to expel or crush elements that threatened desolation to his family—but can I forget that woes innumerable and unutterable are hourly rising to heaven, and yet the power that could extinguish them is withheld. I candidly confess that if I must construct on the narrow foundation of human feeling or action, a tower of argument that shall reach to heaven, I must plunge without help into the abyss of Atheism, for no human analogies whatever can explain the phenomena of our world. And if I am taught a lesson of humility and awe by ten thousand circumstances, which do violence to all my *a priori* expectations, am I to trust in relation to God's treatment of sin, inferences which are drawn from occasional acts of clemency extended by a parent to a refractory but repentant child. I decline to do it—I tremble to do it.

(2.) But Secondly, and more particularly, the analogy is

not even sound as far as it goes. We should decline to accept the conclusions drawn from it on the preliminary ground just considered, even though we could detect no vitiating elements, but we have now to separate one or two of these elements and put them in as clear a light as we can, that you may see the rottenness of their texture.

In the case of the earthly parent we saw that he might equitably and beneficially remit the threatened penalty. He might do it and still be just—he might do it and still maintain an unimpaired authority—he might do it and strengthen the loving fealty of his child. But then we saw that in this case there was in the child a real hearty repentance—a genuine and unmistakable sorrow for his sin. The chords of natural affection by which the heart of a parent and a child are bound together are so numerous and strong, that it is no uncommon thing for a son to feel more keenly the anger of his father or mother than any corporeal punishment they may choose to inflict. And in the big and frequent tears that fill his eyes, and in the sleepless night which follows some act of transgression, the father may well find at times, not indeed a sufficient expiation for the wrong, but a reliable guarantee against its repetition. But shall we be told that man feels aught of the same tenderness, in relation to his Father in heaven, that children feel in relation to their father on earth? Is he as grateful as they? Is he as sensible of his dependence as they? Is he as soon melted under blessings as they? Is he as distressed at the remembrance of sin against God, as they at their sin against those that gave them birth? Is there one man that mingles his tears with his meat because of his insults against heaven, for ten thousand children that mourn their disobedience to their parents

with undissembled sorrow? And yet when we consider that God is the primal fountain of all our blessings—that He gives us life, health, rain, and fruitful seasons—day with its light—and night with its soothing darkness—our very parents themselves, and that He causeth us all things richly to enjoy, our contrition for sin ought to be as instinctive, as universal, and far more pungent and distressing than that which is felt by children. But is it so? Is not man universally, unless when subdued to penitence by the Spirit of God, at enmity with Him? Does he not become petrified beneath the very showers of blessing that descend unceasingly upon him? Does he not resent, with a scowl of pride, and disdain all exhortations to confession and humiliation before God? Does it not signalise the first grand triumph of Divine grace in a man's soul when he will break the long silence of years, and with a bursting heart and flood of tears say, as he looks up to heaven, "Father, I have sinned?" Is it not announced among angels and saints in bliss as a wonder, "Behold he *prayeth*?" But why a wonder—why such reluctance to confess—why such defiance—why such hardness—why such ingratitude, if it were not the fact that depravity has affected our relations to God in a manner in which it has not affected the relations of a child to his father? A child loves his father notwithstanding occasional acts of insubordination, but the sinner's first sin starts him on a course of hatred, which knows no turn until grace arrests him, and brings him first to himself and then to his God. The genuine penitence of a child does not find its counterpart in the brief and resultless penitence of a terrified sinner, but in the abiding and fruitful penitence of one who has been quickened by the Holy

Spirit. The two cases, therefore, lack a fundamental element of correspondence,—a flaw which vitiates the whole analogy. In the instance of a child there is a deep love underlying his disobedience, prompt, for the most part, on reflection or on tender remonstrance to pour itself forth in a tide of unaffected sorrow; while, on the contrary, in the instance of the sinner against the law of God, there is an intense hatred, of which each act of sin is but the expression and aggravation, instead of being an exceptional departure from the general current of his feeling and life. If it be asked whether, on the supposition that a sinner was seen by the omniscient eye of God to be distressed with a sense of guilt, which supplied a sufficient guarantee against future transgression, He might then equitably forgive the past without any atonement? I reply, that such a case I believe to be impossible in fact, however easy of conception, and that the subjects of God's moral government are so vast, and its interests so sacred, that I dare not say that any one sin, in any conceivable circumstances, could be forgiven in this manner, without withdrawing from the whole fabric of His administration its most essential support.*

(3.) Thirdly. We object to the analogy drawn from the conduct of an earthly parent, that it suppresses the regal relationship of God. That God is a father we allow, but that He is nothing but a father we emphatically deny. As already hinted, the facts and phenomena of our world defy all attempts to reconcile them to the simple idea of pater-nity. They imperatively demand for their even approximate solution, that we enlarge our conception of the governing authority, by including in it something more august and inflexible than mere fatherhood can imply. If

* See note (E) Appendix.

God is our Father, He is also our King.* In Him ultimately reside the supreme legislative and executive of the universe. He has established His *throne* in the heavens. He sways a sceptre of righteousness. His kingdom ruleth over all. He is the *Judge* of the whole earth. He is of too pure eyes to behold iniquity. He will by no means clear the guilty. The magistrate who is at the same time a father, having a son who has broken the law of his country, cannot, without being the greater transgressor of the two, allow his paternal feelings to come in, in arrest of judgment, or even in mitigation of the penalty. Whatever may be the yearnings of his heart, he must remember that law is law, and that while natural tenderness has its place, its place is not to trample on the sacredness of justice. It may be said that the magistrate is bound to execute the penalty on the ground that he is under oath to administer the law with impartiality; but the fact is, that it would make no difference if you suppose king, magistrate, and father all merged in one, and if you invest the king with sole authority to make the laws, for the moment the laws become published, they are in a high sense independent of him altogether, and bind him as much to execute them, as his subjects to obey them. If any man chooses to vindicate for the Divine Being such a supremacy, such a wanton absoluteness of power, that he can change, abrogate, and make moral laws at will; if he chooses to affirm that there is no essential and eternal and immutable rectitude in the universe, and that therefore God may justly do as He pleases, and may please to do anything, and may *make* it right by thus pleasing—I have nothing to say to him. It is useless reasoning with any one who holds that morality

* See note (F) Appendix.

is as much an arbitrary creation as the moon. Such a man may very consistently hold that God may forgive without any consideration, and without any guarantee for the security of His government, but I should in this case greatly doubt whether it were wrong to sin, and whether there could be, in any true sense of the term, any sin to be forgiven. The doctrine I am seeking to establish will be found, on a thorough-going analysis, to ground itself on the postulate, that the laws of God are the expressions of an eternal rightness; that they spring not so much from His will, as they spring from His nature; and that, therefore, (if I may be allowed the language), they are as much binding on Him as on His creatures. Were it otherwise, government would be a synonym for caprice, and it would be as equitable, seeing that will would *constitute rightness*, to send to perdition the innocent as to condemn the guilty. The whole philosophical gist of this matter may be condensed into the aphorism "That the laws of God are not right because He has enacted them, but He has enacted them because they are right," and hence to allow them to be dishonoured without vindication and enforcement would be to participate in the transgression. Even a father has no right to forgive except on such conditions as will maintain the dignity of domestic rule, and be of advantage to the refractory; but when to the relation of father you superadd that of king, the need for such conditions becomes all the more imperative. Then the personal feelings of the parent, however intense, must be held in strict abeyance while he administers the law, with tears, it may be, but still with an inflexible faithfulness, which shews that "justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." He may pity his child while he

punishes him, but he must punish him though he pities. It is not wrong for him to have a tide of tenderness swelling over the shores of his soul, but in pronouncing on his guilty son the sentence of banishment, he is declaring with impressive emphasis that there is a limit to a parent's prerogative beyond which it is at its peril that it dares to plant its foot. These elements—the regal and the paternal—meet in God. Because there is the regal, justice must be satisfied ; because there is the paternal, mercy will seek to spare the sinner. If there were nothing but the paternal there might be no justice. The regal demands the vindication of its majesty ; the paternal longs for the gratification of its sympathy. Thus they seem to stand in awful antagonism ; which shall succumb ? If the regal, justice dies beneath the heel of clemency. If the paternal, as the sinner has no claim on clemency, he dies. The death of Christ solves the difficulty by an expedient which enables God to be “just and the justifier of the ungodly.” The king smiles upon a law that is honoured—the father rejoices over a son that is saved. Let us indeed condense the whole statement of the problem into a single sentence,—an atonement is necessary in every case in which public forgiveness has to be extended by a king to his own son for the violation of public law, and the atonement must bear proportion to the position of the son, the crime he has committed, and to the consequences which would have resulted from the licentious remission of the penalty without an atonement. Thus far the paternal theory fails to satisfy an awakened conscience, because it fails to furnish an equitable ground for the remission of sin.

IV.

We now come to the last device which has been adopted

for the purpose of meeting man's sense of guilt, and we shall not be detained long in the exposure of its utter inadequacy. And I cannot in introducing this theory, refrain from expressing in language as temperate as my convictions will allow me, my dislike of the foggy style in which its chief patron manages to express himself precisely in those portions of his writings on which it behoves him to be most explicit and clear. It is not that he has not the faculty of perspicuity. He can make his thoughts stand out as clearly as mountain peaks in the morning sky when it suits him. Many of his sentences are sharp and crisp enough. But when, after having dealt heavy, and often ignorant and unscrupulous, blows at others' views, he comes to the exposition of his own, he writes as if the function of language were to conceal thoughts and not reveal them, and as if there were a special pleasure in enacting the part of the cuttle fish, and hiding himself in his own ink. It is no insignificant achievement to preserve one's patience until one has fairly grasped his doctrine, if that may be ever said to be grasped which is so attenuated and shadowy as to be almost impalpable.

I refer to Mr. Maurice, whose voluminous writings of recent years would be a marvel were it not that with one or two partial exceptions they are as insubstantial as they are voluminous. We recommend him and his imitators, children of the mist, to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" Archbishop Whateley's preface to his exquisite edition of *Bacon's Essays*, and if that do not prove an effective medicine, they are incurable. But obscurity is not the only feature of Mr. Maurice's writings; they contain more contradictions and more inconsequential reasoning than any works with which I am acquainted. On the subject, for

example, before us, he professes a horror of a theology based on consciousness, and yet he labours might and main to prove that his doctrine satisfies the conscience, as if conscience were not itself within the domain of consciousness. So far as we have been able to distil the spirit of his theory from a bewildering mass of verbiage, it is as follows. Man is guilty, and he needs a Saviour. Revelation supplies his need by bringing him into acquaintance with that Saviour. Christ is our deliverer, because he presents to us the spectacle of a perfect self-sacrifice. Humanity which had destroyed itself by selfishness is now saved, because it appears in Christ no longer selfish, but sacrificing self in a perfect obedience to the will of God. This is all that man needs to know and thoroughly to appreciate, and he is both forgiven and purified. Now what is the reply of conscience to all this? It says, my guilt clings to me and oppresses me more than ever. The last faint ray of hope which sometimes seemed to flicker through the gloom is now extinguished. You tell me that another has yielded a perfect homage to the law, but that gives no consolation to me who am languishing beneath the weight of a godless life. As I gaze on Him, the contrast between His holiness and my sinfulness, only whets into keener sharpness the stings of remorse. You tell me that humanity has sacrificed itself in the life and death history of Christ. But I feel that if by humanity is meant the whole race, then it is false, for I am conscious that I was not in Christ, and that therefore I never sacrificed myself in Him. And if by humanity be meant only the humanity of Christ, then again my distress returns in stronger paroxysms, for use what cloudy phrases you may, it amounts but to this, that there has been one man who has lived and died without sin, and that to me is

no comfort, unless I can be assured that he has made an honourable atonement to the law for my transgressions. And more than this, if Christ was not a substitute for me, then when I remember his innocence, and read of all the inconceivable agony which He endured, my alarms are still more increased, for how can I rid myself of the conviction that if such suffering came even upon the guiltless, much more is in reserve for the guilty. I want my condemnation to be removed, and you tell me that there is one who never deserved condemnation. I want to be reconciled to God, and you tell me of one who was never at enmity with Him. I want to know if the law has been perfectly honoured for me, you tell me that another has perfectly honoured it for himself. I ask for bread, and you give me a stone—I ask for a fish, and you give me a serpent. No! this is not the theology which satisfies a fully awakened conscience. The soul still cries for a forgiveness which shall not steal its way to us behind a justice that sleeps, or force its way to us over a justice which is trodden under foot, but which shall come to us in an open and honourable manner, under the eye and with the sanction and the smile of justice. It knows that its sin is a fact, and must receive literal punishment or compensatory expiation. And hence it is that when the Saviour is preached as one that died for us—that bore our sins in His own body on the tree—that was made a curse for us—that presented to the law a consideration sufficient to warrant it in remitting its penalty, the soul feels that its want is met and satisfied. It becomes then assured that no damage has accrued to the Divine government through the pardon which is graciously bestowed, but that on the contrary, the death of Christ has given to it an impressive majesty and sanctity, equal to that which

it would have derived from the full infliction of punishment on the sinner himself. And I care not what may be the keenness of the agony ; and I care not what may be the depth and darkness of the despair ; and I care not what may be the frenzy and the fear of a soul when its sins against heaven seem to stand at its door, as if to hurry it away to perdition, let it but then believe in Christ as an atoning Saviour, and immediately the agony is soothed and healed, and the despair is swallowed up by a good hope, and the frenzy and the fear are banished by a new song, "Even salvation unto our God." The doctrine of a vicarious sacrifice harmonises with human consciousness, but is it found in Scripture?

To the establishment of the doctrine as one of revelation we now proceed, and we shall compress our remarks within the very narrowest limits consistent with perspicuity. Let a man take the Bible and read it from beginning to end, and then be asked what rite or institute has struck him as most distinctive and pervasive of it, he will immediately answer—*Sacrifice*. Whatever may be its *meaning*, this he will assert to be the *fact*. Whatever he may hold as to its origin, he will say—there it is. The phenomenon is unmistakable, its source and import may be matters of debate. And they have been. As to the origin of sacrifices, they have been held by one party to be human, and by another to be divine.* A few words on this dispute shall suffice. Is it likely that, after placing himself at enmity with God by sin, man would, of his own accord, build an altar and seize an innocent animal and slay it, and consume it with fire? Every separate act in this series we hold to be utterly incongruous with any known principles or tendencies of the

* See note (G) Appendix.

human soul. As to the building of an altar, whence, even if the idea of sacrifice had entered the sinner's mind, should that arise? Why not place his sacrifice on the ground, or on a stone in his neighbourhood? Then why lay hands on a creature that had gambolled with unoffending playfulness around him from day to day? And why shed its blood? One would naturally imagine that a sinner, trembling under a sense of guilt, would think his case terrible enough without being aggravated by an act of cruelty. Would he not apprehend that his punishment would be all the speedier and more severe if he dared to take away the life of a lamb that was more innocent than himself? Besides, what relation could he discover or suspect between the violent death of an inferior animal and his own sin? And then why consume it with fire? There is something so extraordinary in this whole apparatus and process; something so foreign to what we feel to be the natural promptings of the heart, that we regard the theory of the human origin of sacrifice as encumbered and oppressed with difficulties so grave as to call for its abandonment. If, however, it be contended by its advocates, that after all, it was not so unnatural as we have represented for sacrifices to have their birth in the consciousness of man, we are prepared with a conclusive reply. If their origin were human, then it must have sprung from a sense of their necessity as a medium of approach to God; and if it sprung from this sense, it was either healthy or unhealthy, true or false; if it were healthy and true, then it was as much divine as if God had appointed the sacrifices, man's feeling being only the anticipation of the authorised prescription of the rite; and if it were unhealthy and false, then are we staggered with the fact that God adopted, consecrated, enlarged, commanded,

accepted a system of ritualism which He knew to be at once the offspring and the parent of a grievous error. To those who can accept the latter alternative, and believe that morality is a thing of indifference even in heaven itself, I shall say nothing. To those who accept the former alternative, I need say as little, for in the last analysis it matters nothing whether God pre-appoints an ordinance, or man, in virtue of the sense of right and propriety which remains within him, feels the necessity for the ordinance, and performs such religious acts as, if neglected, God himself would command. Meanwhile, for the reasons just stated, I am persuaded that God himself took the initiative in this matter, and that all the sacrifices of heathendom are but the blurred and perverted traditions of a heaven-descended ordinance. The prominence given to animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, has been felt as a distressing fact by the rejecters of the atonement. To escape its pressure they have, of recent years, endeavoured to invalidate the authenticity of the Mosaic documents, and of others long posterior to the age of the great lawgiver. Some, however, shrinking from so grave an extreme, have sought to resolve all the sacrifices into thank-offerings, or offerings for ceremonial delinquencies, and to strip the rite of all reference to moral transgressions. But this attempt must be briefly disposed of, and then we shall have to put in as clear a light as we can, the import of the Mosaic sacrificial institute in its bearing on the redemptive work of Jesus. Have we, or have we not, in the Old Testament, any unmistakable instances to prove that God forgave moral sin through the symbolic mediation of sacrifices? * Let us see. Perhaps it will be allowed that idolatry is a moral sin. In

* See note (H) Appendix.

the thirty-second chapter of Exodus, which contains the record of the worship of the golden calf, we are told that "Moses said unto the people, ye have sinned a great sin, and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh! this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold—yet now, if Thou wilt, forgive their sin." Here you will observe is a moral sin, a sin, the forgiveness of which is conditioned on the making of an atonement. Again, when, on the destruction of Korah, the people murmured, Moses said to Aaron, "Go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them, * * and he put on incense and made an atonement for the people."

If it be objected to these citations that sacrifice is not distinctly mentioned as the medium and condition of forgiveness, we beg attention to the following instance, where the ritual service is more minutely given. "If a soul sin and commit a trespass against the Lord, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; or hath found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely, in any of all these that a man doeth, sinning therein: then it shall be because he hath sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto *him* to whom it appertaineth in the day of his trespass-offering." Then, the affair was rectified with man.

But the divine aspect of the sin remains unsatisfied. Hence he is commanded to "bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock for a trespass-offering, unto the priest ; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him for anything of all that he hath done in trespassing therein." Instances of this kind might be greatly multiplied, and if language has, or can have, any meaning, we learn from such passages that pardon was dependent on sacrifice, and that it was not bestowed without an atonement symbolically accomplished by sacrifice.* And here the question fairly emerges. If there be no atoning element in the death of Christ, then what is meant by the sacrifices just considered ? Shall we, while we preserve vividly in our minds the fact that the institution was Divine, affirm that it was needless and without meaning ? Here is a rite which can be proved with a cogency hardly less stringent than demonstration, to have existed from the fall of man,—a rite which, with insignificant modifications determined by circumstances, continued down to the death of Christ with the sanction of Heaven ; a rite which was enthroned in a regal position among the Israelites in the wilderness and after their settlement in the promised land ; a rite relative to which, and the most insignificant matter connected with it, God gave the most minute and explicit instructions ; a rite, for the due celebration of which a priestly family was appointed, out of which none, save on peril of death, might usurp the office ; a rite which was to be performed with blood ; what is its significance ? What means the victim ? What means the altar ? What means the blood ? What means the fire ? What means

* See note (I) Appendix.

the priest? What means the high-priest? What means the mercy-seat? And what means the making of an atonement within the veil, for the sins of the people? The priest was sprinkled with blood, the people were sprinkled with blood, the book was sprinkled with blood, the altar was sprinkled with blood, the tabernacle was sprinkled with blood, the vessels of the ministry were sprinkled with blood, the mercy-seat was sprinkled with blood. The groans of the dying victims God heard for some thousands of years, their writhing agonies God saw, the sprinkling of their blood He commanded as a condition of forgiveness. Where shall we find the explanation of all this? Will any one dare so far to degrade the character of the King of kings, as to say that he derived any satisfaction from the mere slaughter and offering of so many harmless creatures? But if He found no pleasure in such sacrifices in themselves, what is the principle which underlies their appointment? If it be true that sin has thrown no legal obstacle in the way of the sinner's approach to God; that God is as accessible as before, without any special apparatus arising out of the new element of sin; that it is a serious and heaven-dishonouring mistake to suppose that any intermediate object of suffering, whether symbolic or symbolised, typical or typified, is required to come between man and his Maker as a medium of forgiveness:—then are we confronted with the bewildering fact, that the Divine Being was the appointer and patron, for thousands of years, of a ceremonial of blood which, viewed in itself, could give Him no pleasure, and which did not even possess the dignity of prefiguring a grand reality. Men who can adopt such a view of the Holy One of Israel—and we calmly defy them consistently to escape it,—have reason sufficient to be jealous for His

honour, but the peril which threatens it comes from themselves, who accuse Him implicitly of long centuries of systematic and unmeaning cruelty ; cruelty in recognising a ceremonial of blood when, according to their faith, He might have as justly received the worshipper without a single victim suffering a single pang. Where is that fatherhood of which they speak in such glowing and ill-considered terms ; that fatherhood which has nothing to consult but its own instincts of sympathy and pity ; that fatherhood which, in virtue of its own prerogative, can chide the insulted and clamorous law into silence and set aside its claims ; that fatherhood which allows a few tears to dissolve mountains of sin ; the fatherhood which threatens but will not execute, which commands but will not enforce, and which by its soft and flexible indulgence stimulates the very disobedience it should suppress ? Where is it ? The whole ancient dispensation rises up, and from the midst of burning altars and fuming incense, symbols at once of a mercy that will save, and of a justice that must be satisfied, declares in tones loud as thunder, "It is not in me," while it points with its finger onwards to Him at whose coming its fires shall be extinguished, its censer shall be laid aside, and its veil shall be rent in twain from top to bottom.

That voice, thus distinct and emphatic, is heard by John the Baptist, who, as he saw Jesus coming in the distance, exclaimed, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." These words strike me as having about them a solemn force and conclusiveness. I cannot conceive of a mind, unless impervious to evidence, that can resist their bearing upon the work of Christ. They are a convincing proof that the forerunner saw in Him the fulfilment of all sacrificial types, that He was the

substance which had reflected the shadows, and which now displaced them. Were this not the case, may we not ask on what grounds John should give to Him this appellation? It was not chosen at random. It was designed to express the chief characteristic of Christ, His highest relationship to the world. It surely is not an inappropriate inquiry why, of all the words with which John was familiar, he should use "Lamb of God?" Why did he not say "Behold the great teacher that taketh away the ignorance of the world?" Why did he not say "Behold the great example that is to be the model for the world?" Why did he not say "Behold the king who is to rule over the hearts of men?" Not because each of these designations would not have been strictly appropriate, but because neither singly nor in combination would they express the great work which Christ had come to do. He was to teach, but the highest truth He had to teach was His own death; He had to be an example, but the motives and impulses for its imitation were to come from His death; He was to be a king, but the power which was to vanquish rebels was to be His death. John went to the vital root of all the Saviour was to be to the world when he said "Behold, the *Lamb of God!*" He thought of the Paschal Lamb; and as that was slain, and by its death (symbolically) took away the sin of the Israelites, so was Christ to be slain, and by His death was to take away the sin of the world.

But what is the teaching of Christ's own words and life respecting the work by which He was to save the world? If any reliance is to be placed on language, the greatest fact in His history and the most momentous, was His *death*. Of Him alone among all the generations of men that ever inhabited the earth, it could be said that He came into the

world in order to die. We came to live, to think, to plan, to labour, to battle with difficulty, and to achieve success. But our Saviour never spake of death as that which was to terminate His active usefulness. Death was to be His great work. He was to accomplish more by His death than by His life. He never spake of His death as a mere ordinary exit from life. It was to be connected with the spiritual and eternal destinies of the world. The vision which seemed ever to float before Him was His death. On one occasion He exclaims, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished."* On another, "She hath come beforehand to anoint my body to the burial." On another, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." On another, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it up again in three days." On another, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." On another, "I lay down my life for the sheep." When on the occasion of His transfiguration, Moses and Elias came down from Heaven, they spake with Him of the decease He should accomplish at Jerusalem. But the two scenes which place the sacrificial nature of the Saviour's death in a light intenser than that of the noon-day sun, are those of the garden of Gethsemane and the Cross. So long as these solemn and thrilling narratives remain in the gospel history, so long will the evidence for the atonement be such as to compel conviction, except in minds surrounded by bulwarks of prejudice and self-righteousness, which it is not the function nor the design of evidence to overthrow. With hearts undistorted by habits of subtle evasion let us gaze on that garden scene.† There is Christ with the three dis-

* See note (K) Appendix.

† See note (L) Appendix.

ciples who were generally His associates in the most solemn events of His life. He begins "to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith He to them, my soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death, tarry ye here and watch with me." Why this distressing grief? It must have some source, what is it? Is it that He is soon about to leave His disciples? What, when He had been exhausting all the highest fountains of consolation in order to dispel their sorrow, assuring them that He would come again, that He would not leave them comfortless, that He was going to prepare a place for them, and that it was expedient for them that He should go away? Again we ask, whence arises that heaviness of soul? Is He conscious of any neglected duty? Already has He declared, with eyes uplifted to Heaven, "Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth."

Now He goes a little farther, as if He felt Himself enveloped in a cloud of agony, and falls on His face and prays, saying, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." And He prays yet more earnestly, and His sweat is as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, and again He says "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done."*

As we gaze upon this scene, with its sorrow and its tears, and its trembling, and its anguish, and its blood; and as we hear such cries as never pierced the heavens before and as will never pierce them again, the inquiry rises to our lips, whence such unutterable woe? Is it fear of death? What, innocence shrinking from the event which crowns it with everlasting honour? What, He shrinking from death who had declared Himself to be the

* See note (O) Appendix.

resurrection and the life? Is it the form of death He dreads? What, when thousands have, without a sigh, and even amid songs and smiles, been tortured out of life by physical sufferings with which His cannot be compared? I ask not where is the martyr's jubilation, I ask where is the martyr's calmness? Where the martyr's dignity? Where the martyr's resignation? Unless there are elements in this sorrow special, and to us inconceivable, send us not to Gethsemane to learn how courageously innocence can contemplate death. Veil the scene, or we shall despise the weakness, and the perturbation, which can be felt by a soul which, because sinless, should have been as serene as the upper heavens. Even guilt herself, in the breast of the assassin, can look with unmoved composure at the glittering block; and can innocence be smitten with such frantic dismay? If we must cross the brook Kedron to behold an example, we must return, unhappily, with the conviction that the heaviest woe is reserved for the faultless Man, and that one only needs to be perfect in order to be overwhelmed with the waves of misery.

But what shall we say of the prayer that Jesus offered,—“Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me.” What cup? If it be merely the cup of death, divested of all atoning intent and efficacy, then the questions already asked recur with intenser force, and the impression is irresistible that the scene is one of most unseemly and humiliating weakness. And if it were simply such a cup, why should the prayer be denied? He had not deserved to die. He was but pleading for an exemption to which His disconnection from a sinful humanity entitled Him. By the phrase “if it be possible” He invoked every attribute of the Divine nature, in their fullest energy, to open for Him a

way of escape. And why was it not possible. He was not concluded under death by personal sin. There was no environment of human skill and force that prevented His deliverance. In a moment He could have rendered Himself invisible. Why, then, was it not possible? To this no answer but one can ever be given, except such as make us blush for the weakness or the dishonesty of the men who propound them. Christ might have escaped death on every account save *one*. There was but one necessity which bound Him to it, but one impossibility. Had He resolved to abandon the enterprise of saving man, He might have returned to heaven at once. Then the cup would have passed from Him. It was possible for the cup to pass from Him, but then it was not possible for the Divine law to be honoured; it was possible for the cup to pass from Him, but then it was not possible for sinners to be saved. Is the question asked by any man whether an equitable salvation is possible apart from an atonement, the question was asked by a greater than man, and the solemn NO by which it was answered might well awe the universe into a profounder reverence for law, while it filled it with admiration of that mercy which paid so great a ransom. Awful were those moments during which the Saviour waited for the reply, during which more than the Saviour waited. And the answer came, came in a silence He knew how to interpret, and to which He gave the submissive response, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, Thy will be done." Infinite wisdom, and a love as infinite, confessed themselves baffled in the attempt to spare the "beloved Son" the anguish from which He shrunk, and at the same time to deliver a rebel world. The cup must be drunk, or men must perish. This was the

alternative. And no sooner was it finally declared than Jesus fixed his eye stedfastly on the cross.

To Calvary we must follow Him, for it is there that the evidence for his vicarious death culminates, and becomes, to a devout and childlike mind, irresistible. We call attention to that single cry that pierced the darkness caused by the momentary total eclipse of the face of his Father, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me." I seek not to fathom the profound mystery of these words. To understand their full import would require one to experience the agony of desertion which they express. But if we cannot descend into the sacred soul of the Saviour and watch its workings and describe in language all the elements of His woe,—if He "trod the wine-press alone," and none can ever be "with Him,"—it is, happily, easy enough to show that every account of the cry which excludes the idea of a real and substitutionary atonement fails most egregiously to satisfy the obvious meaning of its awful words. There is a sense, (unless we blasphemously regard them either as feigned, or as the wild words of momentary aberration,) in which they embody a terrible truth. What is the truth? If His death was simply personal in its bearings, if it bore no reference whatever to a dishonoured law; if, so far as He was concerned in His individual character, responsibilities, words, and works, He was still "the beloved" Son in whom the Father was "well pleased;" if, in short, in His private relationships towards heaven, He was as spotless as the snow, shall we dare impeach the justice and faithfulness of God by saying that He deserted expiring innocence? Or, shrinking from a charge so grave, shall we say that Jesus lost His faith and fortitude in circumstances in which even imperfect men have sung their very pæans of victory, and

that He wrongfully complained of the withdrawal of His Father's face when, if His sufferings were simply personal, that face must have been shedding its fullest light upon Him? What is the meaning of the cry? If it is acknowledged that the Saviour was not in error, there was a sense in which He was forsaken. What is the sense? If it is daring impiety to suspect that He was abandoned, if His death were private and personal, and not vicarious, in what light must that abandonment be regarded? This question we press. It is vital. It demands an answer that shall preserve untainted the innocence of Christ, that shall preserve unsuspected the faith and courage of Christ, and that shall preserve unimpeached the love and faithfulness of the Father. Where is the answer that adequately fulfils these conditions? We calmly affirm that no such answer has been, no such answer can be found save one, and that is given by the prophet Isaiah, and repeated in the New Testament in almost every conceivable variety of phrase, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." "Surely, He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows." It was on the cross that Christ was working out the problem of conciliating the bestowment of mercy with the maintenance of justice, that He was establishing an empire of grace on the foundation of law, that He was blending into full and everlasting concord for man's salvation, every element in the regal and the paternal relationships of God; and that He was, by sufferings inconceivable, supplying guarantees and securities for ever irrefragable that the pardon of sinners should never bring into contempt the laws of heaven, but should impart to them a sanctity and impressiveness unfelt before.

That such was the meaning of the cross is placed by the apostles beyond reasonable doubt. They, at least, take no pains to conceal the fact that the salvation of man was wholly traceable to the death of Christ. Let us hear them speak of the procuring condition of forgiveness.* The Apostle Paul, when writing to the Ephesians, says, "in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The same expression, without the slightest variation, he employs in his epistle to the Colossians. To the like purport is the passage in the epistle to the Hebrews, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Peter assures us that "Christ is highly exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and forgiveness of sins."† And John speaks of Him as the "propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." They speak of His death as the price of our ransom and redemption,—I say His death and not his *life*, His death and not His *example*, His death and not His *teaching*. "Who gave Himself a ransom for all." "Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity." "Feed the Church of God which He purchased with His blood." "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious blood of Christ."‡ If expressions such as these do not teach us that the death of Christ and pardon are so connected with each other that the latter is absolutely dependent on the former, then there is no meaning in language, then inspiration itself bewilders when it should guide, obscures when it should illumine, and infinite wisdom might well confess itself baffled in the endeavour to find or fabricate words and phrases that should

* See note (M) Appendix.

† See note (N) Appendix.

‡ See notes (F,Q) Appendix.

convey the truth that man is saved through the atonement of Christ. If this verity is not affirmed in the words we have cited with the most unambiguous precision, if, indeed, it is not as visible throughout the whole Apostolic writings, either in distinct asseverations, or in allusions quite as significant, as if it had been traced in sunbeams, then it is but little to say that the apostles were arrant blunderers when they used the pen; little to say that they employed language with a foolish recklessness; little indeed to say that they did not possess an average modicum of common intelligence. The Holy Spirit that directed them is compromised in what thus becomes a systematic and soul-destroying perversion of speech, and the Bible, though from heaven, wins for itself the inglorious fame of being the worst written book in the world.

But I feel that this paper threatens to betray me into inordinate length, and I must bring it to a close. You will not expect me to reply to all the arguments which, from various quarters, have been urged against the doctrine of the atonement. Suffice it that in one compendious declaration we disavow the opinions charged upon us, that God is less forgiving than man,—that He requires the satisfaction of personal vengeance—that there is a change in the Divine mind,—that He demands a double payment—that Christ sustains an unjust infliction—that the atonement is a legal fiction—and that the final condemnation of some sinners involves, as a consequence, the failure of the redemptive scheme. These and all kindred imputations on our theological faith we repudiate. Once and again have they been slain by men valiant for the truth, and though they will doubtless still be galvanized into the semblance of life, and dextrously reared up, they

can only scare the timid and the unthinking. That the doctrine of the atonement is the doctrine of Scripture is by implication, significantly confessed by the desperate attempts that are made to discredit the Bible in general, and in particular such portions of it as testify most clearly in favour of the great central truth we have been vindicating. A living Lazarus is a serious torment to unbelieving Jews. And the inspired word is a torment still more serious and more difficult to escape than that of the revived friend at Bethany, to such as deny the sacrifice of Christ; for Lazarus they may kill, but the Word of the Lord shall stand for ever.

If I have said little relative to the sanctifying power of the atonement as correlative to its justifying power and consequent upon it, you will not think me blind to its importance. Can I forget that "without holiness, no man can see the Lord," and that heaven is "the inheritance of the holy ones in light?" But of this I am convinced, that without pardon there is for sinners no purity; that without deliverance from condemnation there is no cleansing from sin; that forgiveness is the foundation on which sanctity is to be raised, the root from which it is to grow, and that where there is the former there will eventually be seen the latter. And because it has been the fashion of recent years, with some writers, to attribute to the death of Christ a moral influence upon the heart, and to conceal or deny altogether its bearing on man's forgiveness, I have been anxious to show that the primary idea of sacrifice is expiation, holiness being its fruitage, nourished and ripened under the quickening beams of the Divine Spirit. The sanctifying efficacy of Christ's death, apart from its atoning character, I utterly deny. In this aspect its efficacy is

feebler than that of the death of Stephen, or Paul. But when the soul sees in the death of Christ means for its deliverance from the burden of guilt which now crushes it to the earth, and threatens at last to sink it even to hell, it is then that it leaps with gladness; then that it is melted with gratitude; then that it vows a living allegiance to its Saviour; then that it makes an unconditional surrender of all it has and is; then that it starts on the highway of sanctification, and finds not its complete repose until it appear in Zion before God.

The adversaries of the doctrine of the atonement have been sagacious enough to perceive that if once it be allowed that the death of Christ has enabled and facilitated an equitable forgiveness, the ground crumbles beneath their feet, and hence they have sought to veil this truth and to propagate the notion that the cross is merely a demonstration to affect the heart. They have denounced it as selfish and cowardly to lay stress on forgiveness, because, they say, it reveals a greater anxiety to escape punishment than sin. Wonderful philosophers, and courageous martyrs these! We have yet to learn that self-love, a true and divine self-love, may not equally with selfishness awaken the desire of avoiding the penalties of sin, and that it is a piece of pusillanimity for a child to seek with tears pardon and favour from an offended father. And is the wrath of God, which has been revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, so trifling and tolerable in its pressure that a man must be deemed weak even to think of escaping it? It is in human nature—it is, we suppose, in angelic nature,—to shrink from suffering, be its source what it may; and if, by the very means through which God has provided forgiveness, He has awakened a gratitude, an inex-

tinguishable gratitude, which will impel the soul to cultivate holiness of character and life, what is man that he should dare to sit in judgment on a method which accomplishes both the pardon and the purification of a sinner, making the former the basis of the latter?

I now conclude. And in doing so, let me say that these are not the times when we can speak lightly of any looseness or obscurity of view on the doctrine we have treated. If we are unsound here, it matters little where we are sound. If this be released from the hand of our faith we might as well fling after it every other related tenet. Might as well! We shall. When the sun has shot away from its sphere it will drag the whole sisterhood of worlds into the same wild ruin. The atonement is the only truth that is stronger than selfishness; it is God's only remedy for sin; it is man's only hope. Without it our confidence is presumption, our faith is fanaticism, our morality is self-righteousness, our preaching is a tinkling cymbal, our churches are temples without altar, sanctuaries without Shekinah, wells without water, lamps without light, palaces whence the king has been bidden to depart, and whence he has gone, not alone, but attended by every grace that can adorn the soul in this world, or fit it for that which is to come. Be this the theme of our ministry, be this the motive of our life, be this our support in death, be this our song for ever—"Christ, and Him crucified."

APPENDIX:

BEING

A REPLY TO THREE LECTURES

BY THE

REV. THOMAS HINCKS, B.A.,

DELIVERED IN THE MILL HILL CHAPEL,

LEEDS,

ON SUNDAYS, MARCH 13TH, 20TH, AND 27TH.



Appendix.

It was far from my expectation when, on the 6th of April, 1858, I read the foregoing paper at Wakefield to the assembled ministers and delegates of the West Riding Congregational Union, that it would be the occasion of any controversy. Such, at least, was not my design in writing it, and indeed my state of health during the whole period of its composition was such as almost to have constrained me more than once to decline the task. Had I at that time contemplated the possibility of its involving me in the labour of a defence, my recoil from the honour conferred by my brethren would have been invincible. But through the mercy of God I am now, happily, strong enough to undertake a work which then would have greatly distressed me. On reviewing, after the lapse of a year, what I then wrote and read, I have met with nothing which seems to call for modification. Of the defects of my paper no one can be more sensible than myself; for indeed the theme is vast, and the time allotted at our annual gatherings for such addresses is, of necessity, limited. Hence the fact that many branches of the great argument in favour of the Atonement were omitted altogether, and that many others were compressed into a compass almost dangerous to perspicuity. On the whole, then, though averse to controversy, I do not regret the opportunity which has been furnished me of expanding sundry hints which occur here and there throughout the paper, and of sustaining by stringent and

articulate proof such principles as Mr. Hincks has felt himself constrained to call in question.

There is one preliminary point on which it is of some moment that my opponent should be set right, inasmuch as his language is calculated to mislead the public. He speaks of my having been selected by the Congregational Union as its *champion*. This statement I meet with the most absolute contradiction. The idea of championship was as foreign to their minds as it was to my own. The fact is that it is our custom to have one paper, at least, presented every year at our annual meeting. Some one must write it, and it was deemed my turn; and indeed so inoffensive with respect to other religious bodies was the whole proceeding that the Address was published only in our own Year Book, the issue of which is almost precisely proportioned to the carefully ascertained demands of the various churches in the Union. This consideration, I take leave to say, is sufficient to shew that controversy was neither challenged nor contemplated, and that Mr. Hincks is responsible for any extra-denominational publicity which my paper has acquired. It is true that at the earnest request of my brethren it was my intention at some future day to publish it apart, but this step has been precipitated solely by the adverse action of my opponent. So much I have deemed it necessary to say in proof that in my preparation of the Address I was not actuated by any desire to assume an obtrusively polemical attitude in relation to the religious body to which Mr. Hincks belongs. Let me not, however, be supposed to insinuate any censure on the gentleman who has subjected my production to such public criticism. It was open to him or any other person to seek in this way to counteract what he regarded as its pernicious influence.

My chief regret after perusing the three discourses which he delivered to his people in Leeds is, to find, that either from haste or some other cause, the questions at issue between us have not been treated with the ability and acuteness which generally characterize the ministers of the Unitarian body, and that there is betrayed throughout a singular unacquaintance with both the literature and the philosophy of the Atonement. This is the more surprising, as Mr. Hincks has, in literary and scientific circles, a high and honorable name.

To the criticism of his sermons (which I earnestly advise my readers to purchase and carefully read) I at once address myself, and shall take up the points as they occur.

Note A.

The first charge brought against Trinitarians in general is the variety of opinion which prevails among them respecting the doctrine of Atonement.

"Who, indeed," Mr. Hincks inquires, "shall tell us in what quarter the true orthodoxy resides? While many still cling to the sterner conception of the doctrine, by many more it has been abandoned as untenable and injurious to the Divine character. While to some the death of Christ is the purchase-money of man's deliverance from Divine wrath, to others it is the expression of God's hatred to sin as an antecedent to pardon, and to others, again, a perfect self-sacrifice only, by which humanity is reconciled to God. And these various and conflicting views, ranging from the old Calvinism to something very like simple Unitarianism, all shelter themselves beneath the same creed, and equally claim the honours of orthodoxy! We are told that the Atonement is the 'heart and essence of the gospel.' But

what Atonement? The Atonement of the Calvinist, or of the Expressionist, or of the advanced school? We ask in vain."—*First Lecture*, pp. 4, 5.

(1.) The theological house in which my opponent dwells is somewhat too brittle to make it prudent for him to throw such stones. When one hears such accusations against the "boasted fixity and uniformity of the orthodox faith" one is tempted to look at the quarter whence they come. And what do we see? We see all shades of philosophy from necessarianism to a liberty hardly distinguishable from casualism—from materialism to idealism; and we see all shades of *theological faith*, from a high Arianism which declines to fix the precise rank in creation of the Son of God down to a simple Humanitarianism—which denies the moral perfections of the Saviour. There is no religious body which includes so great a variety of opinions as the Unitarian, and indeed this is a matter of which they have often vaunted as being a conspicuous and honorable exhibition of their expansive liberality. I refer to the miscellaneous and irreconcilable faiths embraced under the general term Socinianism simply for the purpose of reminding Mr. Hincks and my readers that orthodoxy has not a monopoly of variations.

(2.) But, secondly, my opponent's attempt to create a prejudice against the Atonement by referring to the differences of opinion which prevail respecting it among Trinitarians is futile, even according to his own confession. Only four pages beyond the language I have cited, I was very naturally surprised to find the following frank acknowledgment, an acknowledgment which ought to have necessitated the extrusion of the contradictory paragraph from the lecture. After expounding my theory of the Atonement,

Mr. Hincks concludes with the following words : "The idea of *substitution* which lies at the foundation of it, is essential to every mode and form of the doctrine which passes current as of orthodox quality." This is true, but then it was as true at page 5, as at page 9, and unless there was in the interval, brief as it must have been, some sudden flash of illumination in the mind of the writer, we cannot account for the proximity of statements so diverse. If *substitution* is the *vital, distinctive, essential* element in the orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, what is this but to say that no doctrine of the atonement can be orthodox which has not this element; and what is this again but to say that such doctrines of the atonement as *profess* to be orthodox, and yet do not possess this element, prefer a false claim? My opponent, accordingly, appears in evidence against himself, and whereas in the outset he speaks of the variations of the orthodox on this one doctrine, he afterwards virtually confesses that the variations are but superficial, and that the same vital element underlies them all.

Note B.

"It is a notable point," says Mr. Hincks, "in Mr. Mellor's paper—one indeed which is honorably distinctive—that he makes an appeal to *human consciousness* in behalf of his theology. He admits that the heart of man has a voice in the settlement of the point at issue, and that it is desirable to conciliate it, if possible. This is somewhat new ground for the defenders of the Atonement. They have been accustomed to treat with no small degree of scorn the protest against it founded on the scruples of the reason, and the alarm of the moral sentiments. They have met with lofty disdain the demand for a justification of their

doctrine before the tribunal of the conscience and the heart. They have denied their competency as judges, and have endeavoured to conceal the darker features of their system within the sacred folds of Divine mystery."—*Lecture I.*, p. 10.

I must decline the honour which my opponent here accords to me of inaugurating a new method of defending the Atonement. The appeal to human consciousness on behalf of the theology which I espouse is as old as the theology itself, and I venture to affirm that there are few systematic treatises on Divinity of any value written from the orthodox point of view which do not insist on the perfect accordance of the doctrine of the Atonement with the laws and facts of human consciousness, when rightly interpreted. I say when rightly interpreted, for there are many methods of interpreting the revelation within us as well as the revelations contained in external nature, and the word of God. It must be borne in mind that in the title given to my paper, the doctrine of vicarious sacrifices is said to be "accordant with consciousness." To this phraseology I adhere. That may harmonize with the facts and laws of our mental and moral nature which could not by possibility be elicited from it by any process of mere thinking, and if the doctrine of the Atonement can be shown to do violence to the primordial principles or deliverances of my soul, it ensures its own rejection. As to the contempt which the defenders of the Atonement are charged with having poured on the "scruples of the reason and the alarm of the moral sentiments," such an accusation is more readily made than established. One of the most conspicuous features of the elaborate vindications of this great doctrine which have appeared within the present

century has been their confident appeal to the nature of man, both intellectual and moral, in its support. And the chief complaint has been that Unitarianism, instead of taking an impartial and comprehensive survey of all the facts of consciousness, has restricted its attention to a small portion of them, and constructed its system on these, regardless altogether of the modifying influence of the remainder. The phenomena of conscience, for example, have been systematically ignored, and the perturbations of the heart arising from a sense of guilt have been treated as the ravings of an uninstructed imagination. This, surely, is not a fair and philosophical method of interrogating consciousness.

I am aware that sometimes the advocates of orthodoxy have been incautiously betrayed into the use of expressions which have seemed to cast dishonour and contumely on the reason itself. I disavow all sympathy with such language, as would my opponent with much that is found in the writings of Lindsey and Belsham. But I am persuaded that even in such cases the intention of the writers was simply to protest against the reason being constituted into a supreme judge of truth. And so far their spirit was the spirit of a philosophy no less truthful than devout, for not only is the reason incapable of constructing out of materials self-supplied a whole system of theological truth, but it is compelled both in things spiritual and things material to accept facts which both transcend and correct its prior anticipations. Let the functions of the reason, whether intuitive or discursive, be ascertained, and let its limits be defined, and then in common with all the writers that have defended the doctrine, I hold the Atonement to be in exact accordance with consciousness. How little ground my oppo-

nent has for his allegation, that the believers in the sacrificial character of our Saviour's death, treat with "disdain the tribunal of the conscience and the heart," he may see by reading the second part of "Howe's Living Temple," "Butler's Analogy," Part II., Chap. V., "Wardlaw on the Atonement," "Wardlaw's Systematic Theology," "Hill's Lectures on Divinity," "Jenkyn on the Atonement;" and, above all, as a work at once unanswered and unanswerable, "Gilbert on the Christian Atonement." I cannot imagine that if Mr. Hincks had remembered these treatises, he would have hazarded a statement so egregiously dissonant with the facts; for some of these, and especially the last, are notoriously careful philosophical interpretations of the phenomena of consciousness and of Providence as corroborations and illustrations of the Atonement.

Note C.

The stress of my remarks on man's conviction of sin Mr. Hincks endeavours to meet by regarding the whole case as fictitious. The following are his observations:—" [Mr. Mellor] supposes a special case of spiritual disease—many of the symptoms of which have undoubtedly been produced by the atmosphere of his own theological school—and then proceeds to show us how admirably his theology avails for its cure. He pictures to us a man tormented by a vivid sense of sin, and suspended, as it were, over the abyss of despair, believing that God requires from him a perfect obedience, and that having failed to render it he is liable to eternal death. It is vain to speak to him of repentance and forgiveness, for he knows that his sin is a fact and must receive literal punishment, or compensatory expiation. Having thus invented a sinner of orthodox

type and supplied him with a certain set of convictions and emotions, Mr. Mellor finds no difficulty in proving that the Atonement is the answer to his wants. And this he calls 'a fair and decisive experiment.' We hold, on the contrary, that the wants which he has described are, in great part, artificial—not the natural needs of the common human heart, but the result of a special theological training. Where, indeed, but in the schools of a certain theology, would a man be likely to find the terrible dogmas that God demands from his frail children a *perfect* obedience, and threatens them with eternal penalty if they fail to render it; that he cannot pardon on repentance, that without a substitute he cannot forgive at all."—*Lecture I.*, p. 11.

Now the sinner that I am here charged with inventing was no other than the Philippian jailor. I presume that my opponent accepts the history of his conversion as given in the Acts of the Apostles, and, if so, it is somewhat strange that I should be represented as inventing my own case. The distress of the officer evidently reached the pitch of frenzy. It could not be traced to his anxiety about the security of the prisoners, for he had already received satisfactory assurance that they "were all there." It is clear that the extraordinary events which had just happened had been the means of quickening his conscience and bringing into distinct view his life-long sins. How was his perturbed heart to be pacified? What was the precise "special theological training" which wrought in the jailor such fanatical agony does not appear, nor does the apostle appear to be aware that he had been under such misleading and deceptive instructions. There was, at least, one method of consolation which did not occur to the apostle, and that the very method which appears to be of such direct and sovereign

value to Mr. Hincks. What would have been more natural, on the theory of my opponent, than to have administered such an honest quietus as this :—"You are in a state of unaccountable excitement. You are taking far too dark a view of your case. You are exaggerating your danger. Sin is by no means so serious a thing as you now frantically think. God does not expect a perfect obedience from his frail children." But instead of thus disabusing him of his delusions, the apostle implicitly acknowledged the truthfulness of his self-accusations and alarms, and exhorted him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This the jailor did, and his agitated soul at once sunk into joyous repose. Paul did not benumb the deep moral wounds by a process of soothing casuistry, but he healed them by leading the trembling sinner to the great physician.

One of the fundamental vices of Unitarianism is its slight and slighting views of sin. Conscious that it has no means of satisfactorily meeting the agonizing sense of guilt which is often felt by an awakened soul, it seeks to evaporate the guilt itself. It has no remedy for the disease, and it endeavours to prove that the disease is, for the most part, an hallucination. It has no partiality for the terms sin, guilt, wickedness, corruption, depravity; but while compelled to admit a germinal portion of sin in order not to shock the moral consciousness too rudely, it transmutes all the rest into ignorance and frailty. The philosophy of Unitarianism is, in brief :—"We are not half so bad as we seem;" the philosophy of the Scriptures is,—"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked—who can know it?"

I shall take the liberty of presenting to my opponent one or two considerations which may serve to

place his error on the subject of sin in a somewhat clearer light.

(1.) In the first place, Mr. Hincks's contemptuous language respecting conviction of sin, implies that sin is too trifling a thing to warrant such deep and distressing emotion. How with such a conception of sin he manages to interpret the Scriptures, or even the present movements of Divine providence, I am at a loss to imagine. To pursue the history of sin no farther than its first appearance within the sphere of humanity, it was treated as a serious matter when it cost our first parents the complacency of God, and the paradise in which they had been placed. And when we carry with us the soothing consideration that God does not "expect perfect obedience from his frail children," the devastation of the Deluge, which all but exterminated the race, startles us as a somewhat excessive demonstration of vengeful power ; and the mystery grows darker when, in the light of the same consideration, we see the Cities of the Plain with their inhabitants consumed with fire and brimstone. The estimate which my opponent has formed of sin, did not seem to be shared by that Being who caused the earth to open and swallow Korah and his rebellious associates ;—and if it be sin which has swept from the face of the earth Babylon and Nineveh, as if they had been but morning clouds ; and if it be sin which has brought us all under the dominion of death, and which until now continues to plunge the nations periodically into a cauldron of war with its unutterable horrors, I must conclude either that the notion of sin I am examining is seriously defective, or else that the "frail children" from whom "a perfect obedience is not demanded" are receiving somewhat hard and incomprehensible treatment. But

how much harder and more incomprehensible the treatment appears when we bring into view the retributions of eternity, and remember that of some men Christ himself has said that their punishment shall be as lasting as the joys of heaven. If sin, then, draw after it such consequences, both personal and natural, temporal and eternal, it is strange indeed if our conceptions of it may be too vivid, and if, when most deeply agitated with alarm and sorrow, we may be charged as the victims of mere fictitious and conventional emotions.

(3.) My opponent inquires "where, except in the schools of a certain theology, would a man be likely to find the terrible dogma that God demands from his frail children a perfect obedience."

This question naturally surprised me. I felt like a man who had been challenged to prove the existence of the heavenly bodies, and as in such a case I should content myself with saying "Lift up your eyes on high,"—so now I must call the attention of my opponent to a few explicit declarations of Scripture. The first and most comprehensive passage is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might," Deuteronomy vi. 5 ; or, as it appears in the gospel of Luke, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself." Luke x. 27.

This is a demand which covers the whole region of a man's moral nature and activities. It claims godliness in the fancy, imagination, thought, emotion, conscience, will, speech, and action. The moment in which a man sins is a moment in which the man does not love God with all his

heart. The more a man sins the less he loves God, and, conversely, the more a man loves God, the less he sins. And the two-fold claim which God makes in this all-inclusive law is the profoundest that can be conceived. It does not restrict itself to external conduct, it enters the "inward parts, and commands not only obedience, but an obedience springing from love. And this be it observed is not merely the epitome of a law given to angels, it is given to the "frail children" of men. It would be interesting to see in what language Mr. Hincks would clothe a law that should enjoin "perfect obedience;" if it be not enjoined in the language we have cited from both Testaments. And if no ingenuity can invent broader, deeper, intenser, more spiritual terms—and if such are the terms in which God has compendiously announced his requirements—then we see that not alone in the schools of a certain theology, but in the Scriptures themselves there is found the "terrible dogma that God demands from his frail children a perfect obedience."

I must also request attention to the light which our Saviour himself has thrown upon the meaning and spirit of the law. The sermon on the mount consists in part of an exposition of that law. But is it an exposition that abates, relaxes, modifies its claims? Does it inform us that the law has been too harshly interpreted, that it is far more flexible and accommodating than certain morose theologians have represented? So far from this, the law as coming from the lips of Christ, seems to be more spiritual and rigid, if possible than ever. He rescues it from the abasement to which it had been reduced by the corrupt glosses of the Jewish expounders, and shews that it is outraged by a cherished desire to sin as well as by the overt commission

of the sin. The solemn and authoritative formula "But I say unto you" invariably introduces an expanded and searching interpretation of the spiritual import of the law, and makes us feel the truth of the Psalmist's exclamation "Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

St. James assures us that "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all,"—that is he has rebelled against the authority which appointed the whole law.

The question now is one between Mr. Hincks and the Scriptures. They enjoin "perfect obedience." He may say that God does not expect it, though he has commanded it. In that case I know not that I can do better than request his attention to the following language of Andrew Fuller: "It seems then that God has given us a law by the terms of which He *cannot* abide—that justice itself requires Him if He cannot abate the precept, yet to remit the penalty and connive at smaller instances of transgression. I need not inquire how much this reflects upon the moral character and government of God. Suffice it to say that such views must of necessity preclude *repentance*. If the law which forbids 'every instance' of human folly be unreasonably strict, and the penalty which threatens the curse of the Almighty on every one that continueth not in all things therein written, be indeed cruel, then it must so far be *unreasonable* for any sinner to be required to repent for the breach of it. On the contrary God himself should rather repent for making such a law, than the sinner for breaking it."—*Fuller's Works*, Vol. I., p. 163.

To these observations of one of the most sagacious and sober, as well as acute theologians of the present century, I will only add that just in proportion as "sin" is extenuated into mere "frailty," in that proportion are the terms of the

Divine law enormously and even cruelly extravagant in their demands, and salvation, instead of being a thing of grace and lovingkindness, becomes an act of simple justice which God owes not only to His creatures, but to Himself, for having made them and subjected them to the sway of a law which He neither meant to execute nor to honour.

Note D.

Mr. Hincks tells us that "the human relationship of fatherhood is the only one which our Saviour has selected as the type of the Divine relationship to us."

Now in reply to so startling a statement as this, we ask, on what authority Mr. Hincks ventures to cast overboard the teachings of the Old Testament and of the Epistles on such an important question as the relationship of God to man? The God of the Gospels is the God of the whole Bible, and the inspiration of the visions of Prophets and of the letters of Apostles is as real as that of the Gospels. I will go further and affirm that the Epistles contain a fuller and brighter light than is seen in the Gospels, and that Christ reserved the ampler development of truth until He had ascended on high, when, according to His promise, "He led His apostles into all truth." The practice of raising the Gospels into a pre-eminence which virtually disparages the later books of the New Testament especially, is bad in criticism and contemptuous towards the dispensation of the Holy Spirit who was to "take of the things of Christ and show them unto us." But further, the statement of Mr. Hincks, even so far as it relates to the teaching of Christ during His personal ministry is not only not true, but the very reverse of the truth. Who is the being that is represented by the Lord of the vineyard "whose servants

were beaten and whose son was slain?"—it is God. Who is the being that is represented by the King who on the marriage of his son made a great feast and bade many?"—it is God. And what reader of the Gospels does not know that the relationship of God to man most insisted on is that of a King to his subjects, and that the most familiar expression is "Kingdom of God." A Kingdom generally implies a King—are we to suppose that God has a Kingdom, and yet that He is not a King? It is painful to be compelled to cite such notorious disproofs of Mr. Hincks's unaccountable assertion. It will avail nothing to say that I have referred to parables. The "prodigal son," to which my opponent refers, is as much a parable as they, and the instances in which God is set before us in the Gospels by implication as a King are in the proportion of five to one to the cases in which His Fatherly relation is involved.

As little will it avail him to say, that when God is spoken of as King, it is merely in accommodation to human notions and human analogies. The idea of Father is as human as the idea of King. What God is in Himself we know not: His *essential* relationships to us are incomprehensible. He employs the ideas already existing in us, and the words in which we clothe them, that He may make them vehicles for higher truth. But let a man who has no access to the Scriptures endeavour from the phenomena of nature and of Providence to ascertain the precise relationship which God sustains to the world, and what will be his conclusion? Will the traces of Fatherhood in the sense understood by Mr. Hincks be so universal or even so preponderant as to compel him to the belief that the Great Unseen is a Father and a Father only? While his mind was occupied with the contemplation of the sunshine or

the fructifying showers, plenteous harvests, and all the more pleasant aspects of nature and providence, the reflection most present to his mind might be—there is a Father that loves us : but when from these he turned to the darker picture—to plagues, to earthquakes, to volcanoes, to wars, wasting, devouring, overwhelming, slaying their countless thousands, he might either exclaim “ Verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth,” or be driven to sheer atheism from the feeling that such terrible phenomena were inconsistent with the supposition of a benevolent Omnipotence ; or he might steer into the harbour of Manicheism and resolve the conflicting aspects of the world into the agency of a Duality of Gods, the one evil and the other good. If Fatherhood is the sole relationship God sustains to His creatures ; and if He has sustained this relationship to all men and in all ages, is it not somewhat curious that it was the most advanced idea the world has been brought to entertain of God ?

Note E.

THE RELATION OF PARDON TO REPENTANCE.

Mr. Hincks reiterates in various language the favorite dogma that repentance is the only condition required by God in order to pardon. According to a doctrine so licentious, it is absurd to suppose that sin has any great criminality in the eyes of God. The longest and the most abandoned life finds a full and immediate compensation in the contrition of the sinner. The past becomes immediately as if it had never been, and the law smiles with as much complacency upon him as if he had rendered the most unswerving obedience from the dawn of moral consciousness within him. Indeed obedience becomes very much an

affair of taste, for the Divine law instead of being as we have been accustomed to regard it, high and imperative demand is degraded into a mere suggestion. Its meaning is not "obey or die," but "on the whole it will be convenient to obey, but it is by no means necessary as repentance will do quite as well." As a rule, law has an inflexible authority. It affirms a supreme demand and denounces an inevitable penalty, but, it appears, it is quite a mistake to suppose that it has any such serious meaning in the government of God. It is true that its violation is attended with certain current inconveniences, but then as there are also certain collateral pleasures arising from sin, a man may make his election between obedience with its self-denial and accompanying moral satisfaction ; and disobedience with its gratification and accompanying moral disquietude. *In the end* both courses are equally satisfactory (so says Unitarianism) *to the law*. The tears of a moment are as highly estimated by the law as the persistent, and even heroic obedience of a life-time! The solemn denunciations against disobedience meant nothing at all but a false menace, and it would be cruel in God to treat a sinner that repents any worse than the man (if such there were) that needed no repentance! This is the gospel according to Unitarianism, a life-time of sin followed by a moment of repentance is as satisfactory to the law as a life-time of obedience! This being the case we are constrained to say, that such a law invites and encourages rebellion, and has no right to complain when it receives the treatment which its own unprincipled flexibility has occasioned. Let any governor—nay, let any father announce as the policy which prevails in his household, that while he has certain rules he does not intend to enforce them, and that at the

close of each day he will place on an equal footing of privilege and friendship the son who renders a loving obedience every hour, and the son who *atones* for hourly and even malignant disobedience by sorrow at night ! And what would be the consequence ? Mr. Hincks must be ignorant of the nature of children, if he imagine that any household could be ruled for a single month on any such principle. If the father saw in his own rules, rules he did not mean to enforce, the children would see in them rules they did not mean to respect. There is not a household in these realms worthy of the name in which repentance is deemed an *atonement for disobedience*, still less is this the case in any civil government, and hence the theory of Unitarianism is a pure invention which has no illustrative analogy either in the policy of families or of nations.

Mr. Hincks regards the parable of the prodigal son as yielding conclusive evidence in favour of the doctrine that no atonement is needed as a vindication of the sanctity of law, and as enabling an honourable forgiveness. He considers that it teaches and was designed to teach that repentance is a sufficient compensation, and that it is the sole ground of the sinner's acceptance. Mr. Hincks has protested against the construction of a system of theology on an isolated fragment of Scripture. I would here remind him of his own caution. Neither the parable of the prodigal son nor any other parable of our Lord contains the whole of Christian truth. It teaches the necessity for repentance, but it does *not* teach that there is no necessity for the Atonement. The parables and discourses of our Lord must not be interpreted as if each contained within itself the whole circle of gospel-verities. They are mutually complementary and illustrative. Just as we have thanks to

render, and confessions to make, and supplications to offer, and sorrows to pour out, for which we have no formula of language in the Lord's prayer—so are there truths of the highest moment, which are not found in any nor in all of the parables which have been preserved in the records of the Evangelists. The three parables of which that of the prodigal son is the last, were all designed to set forth the joy there is in heaven when a sinner returns to God, but they were no more designed to unfold all the truths that are connected with the way of salvation than to teach the doctrine of a resurrection or a final judgment. To say that repentance is necessary in order to forgiveness is one thing, to say that nothing else is necessary, is quite another, and is as vicious in logic, as it is erroneous in theology.

The Apostles in their preaching sometimes speak of faith without repentance, sometimes of repentance without faith, and sometimes of repentance and faith as co-essential in order to salvation. To the jailor Paul said "*believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." When preaching at Antioch in Pisidia, he exclaimed "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by him all that *believe* are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." When at Athens he said, "But now God commandeth all men everywhere to *repent*." Here there is no mention made of faith, but we are informed in a previous verse that he had been preaching to the Athenians "Christ and the Resurrection." To the Ephesians he testified "*repentance* toward God and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The great theme of the Apostles is neither repentance, nor faith, nor both combined, but "Christ and him crucified," as at once the source

of repentance and the object of faith. They wrought miracles "in the name of Christ." They declared that there is "no other name under Heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." To the most enlightened they "preached Christ," to the most rude they "preached Christ." The repentance which the Apostles proclaimed as a condition of forgiveness was always connected either explicitly or by implication with the work of Christ. They might have preached to the Gentiles the unity of God in opposition to their polytheism, but that would not have been the gospel. They might have preached the necessity of repentance alone in order to salvation without any mention of the name of Jesus, but that would not have been the gospel. They might have dilated on the excellency of the Saviour's life, but that would not have been the gospel. They might have spoken of his death as a witness to the truth he had taught, but that would not have been the gospel to them so long as they could cite the calm and glorious martyrdom of a Socrates. And if the Gentiles had demanded of the Apostles what was the precise relation Christ sustained to them, to warrant the conspicuous place he held in all their teaching, what must have been their answer? We know what it was not. It was not merely that he had died to relieve them from "ritual disqualifications," or, as Mr. Hincks by a double blunder of thought and language calls them, "legal sins." *Such* a relief would be accounted as a small mercy by the heathen, and they might well be excused for not feeling any oppressive gratitude for so insignificant a deliverance. That which the Apostles preached was "the cross," "the death of Christ," and *that* not as a testimony to truth but as "the truth" itself. On this point I gladly cite the cogent and unan-

swerable reasoning of Dr. Wardlaw. In his sermon on "Christ crucified," he has the following observations :—

"Christ's 'dying for our sins' evidently expresses the *purpose, object, or end* of his death. According to those who deny the Atonement, the death of Christ, like that of any other martyred prophet, was a sealing of his testimony with His blood ; that is (for the phrase can mean no more) an attestation of his sincerity in the claims he advanced, and the doctrines He had delivered to men. His dying 'for our sins' does not mean, they allege, that His death atoned for sin, but simply that it is by the doctrine that His death attested that we obtain forgiveness of sins, and that His death was thus eminently for our benefit. They add to this, indeed, that in His sufferings and death He 'left us an example' (an example of fidelity, patience, meekness, fortitude, submission, and other virtues) 'that we should follow his steps.' But this, it is obvious, although an end, and an important one, collaterally served, was not the direct purpose of his dying. Let us then suppose, that Christ by His death did stamp upon his testimony the full evidence of his sincerity—let us farther freely admit that there are cases, and that this is eminently one of them, in which the circumstances are so peculiar that evidence of sincerity becomes evidence of *truth*—granting all this, you will still perceive that the utmost that can be made of the death of Christ, according to this view of it, is, that it *was one of the proofs* (suppose it as strong and as satisfactory as you please) *of the truth of His doctrine*, and that in this way His dying for our sins *forms no part of the doctrine itself*.

"Now it appears to me utterly unaccountable that in giving a formal statement of the gospel which he had

before preached to them, and after announcing that he was about to do so, he should actually state *nothing but evidence*, no articles of truth at all; not the doctrine in attestation of which Christ died, but merely His *death itself*; not the testimony borne by the martyr, but only the closing proof of the martyr's sincerity! I wish to be understood;—because I have never seen this argument for the atonement advanced, and it has appeared to my own mind, were any proof of the doctrine needful beyond the plain and palpable testimonies of the inspired record, to be quite conclusive.

“Christ's ‘dying for our sins,’ then, according to the class of interpreters I have just referred to, means simply that His death confirmed that doctrine, by adherence to which forgiveness of sins and eternal life are obtained. Well—suppose the interpretation correct. Still, Christ's ‘dying for our sins’ forms no part of the doctrine itself in support and confirmation of which he died, and adherence to which leads to pardon and life. Still, therefore, we have the question—Where, in the statement contained in our text (‘For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and Him crucified’) is the doctrine which Paul preached? How can we suppose a man to come forward and preface what he is going to say with a formal intimation that he is about to remind the persons to whom he writes of the doctrines they had before heard from his lips, and then, instead of following this intimation with any statement of doctrine, merely to reassure them that He by whom the truths they had received were first taught, the founder of the Christian faith, had died to attest their divine authority? Unless we would charge the inspired apostle with such absurdity or inadvertency, we must con-

sider Christ's 'dying for our sins' as a *point of doctrine* and not a mere fact in evidence; nay more, not only as a point of doctrine, but from the manner in which it is introduced, from the peculiar and solitary prominence given to it, as the most important and essential article of the Testimony he had delivered to them—as the very essence and substance of the gospel. In this view all is consistent. The statement given, corresponds with the preface introducing it.”—*Wardlaw's Sermons*, pp. 6, 7, 8.

Salvation through the cross was accordingly the great theme of the apostles' preaching, and the doctrine that repentance is sufficient as a compensation for sin, and as a recommendation to the favor of God, stands convicted of error in the presence of the uniform teaching of those who were commissioned to preach the gospel.

“Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israël and forgiveness of sins.”—*Acts* v. 31.

“Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that *through this man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”—*Acts* xiii. 38.

“In whom we have redemption *through His blood*, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”—*Ephesians* i. 7.

“In whom we have redemption *through His blood*, the forgiveness of sins.”—*Colossians* i. 14.

Note F.

Mr. Hincks constantly confounds the personal and the rectoral in the Divine Government of the world. In reply to all that he has said arising from this confusion, I cannot do better than cite the admirable observations of Gilbert

in his Eighth Lecture "On Objections to the Doctrine of Substitution." As to the objection that the doctrine supposes God to be implacable, he says, "Even to accept of atonement were utterly inconsistent with the charge, but to provide it in an object of the most endeared affection, is the strongest of proofs that no such personal vindictive feeling could have been entertained. The positions that a party is *vindictive*, and yet that he provides an atonement for the release of the criminal, are wholly subversive of each other; so mutually contradictory that to infer the one from the other is the extreme of carelessness or folly. The fact that God has made this provision for us sinners, proves not that He is, but most illustriously that he is *not*, vindictive. It sets forth with the highest evidence, an evidence immeasurably stronger than mere mercy could, His love and goodness.

"Since atonement is made by suffering undeserved by personal guilt, to suppose it to be a *compensation to injured feeling*, must imply a pleasure in extorting suffering commensurate with the wrong received. To represent the God of the Scriptures as having such pleasure, we cannot but feel the greatest possible detraction. Personally considered, therefore, with unbought, self-originated mercy and benignity, He freely pardons the repenting sinner. This *wine*, this *milk*, we buy without money and without price. He frankly forgave us all the debt. Nothing is more fully and plainly set forth in Scripture than that mercy emanated from the bosom of the eternal Father—that it is to be considered as existing there not as the *effect* of atonement, but antecedently and independently. Instead of its *cause*, atonement was its effect. It was the personal piety, love, grace, of the Father from which the expiation of sin

deduced its origin. 'This is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'

"It is as the guardian of interests essentially associated with moral government, that, with profoundest reverence be it spoken, supreme as He is, God Himself is restricted in the exercise of His compassion. When other claims are implicated, the mercy of a holy and righteous ruler, must be ever bounded by his justice. But it is only for the vindication of general interests, not, as some have dreamed, in the cession of personal rights, that the demand of justice intervenes. Hence, and hence alone, therefore, originated the necessity of atonement, an atonement not to personal wrath, but to the supreme vindicator of public claims, that the ends of moral rule might be attained, and the obligation to holiness amongst all creatures continue unimpaired."

And again, in the Sixth Lecture, when answering the question, What is the special bearing of the atonement? he says,

"The special end of it, as just stated, is by attesting the judgment of God on the nature of sin to supply the place of direct penal sanctions; thus maintaining a due respect for law, and securing against the temptation to incur suffering. The proper reply, therefore, must be that its bearing is the same as that of penal sanctions; not on the Divine mind, but on the minds of creatures. The results of atonement, and its operation in producing those results, are all restricted to the benefit of those who are the subjects of the Divine government, while it effects no change at all on the mind of the Governor. God is immutable in His nature, His counsels, His purposes, His grace,

and His goodness ; nor is atonement in any sense the cause, but the fruit of His mercy. It was by it that this most glorious attribute, without injury to any, and in perfect consistency with the dignity of holiness, opened for itself a free and ample passage to relieve the miseries of offending creatures.

“The statements of Scripture are in entire harmony with this representation. Grace to man is nowhere said to have originated in the bosom of the Son, and by His humiliation and death to have been purchased from the Father. But the contrary representation is very explicit. It was the Father who so *loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son* ; while the work of the Son was not less a demonstration of the Father’s pity and goodness than of His own. We are not, be it particularly remarked, redeemed *from* God, but to God by the death of Christ. He died the just for the unjust ; for what end ? that He might deliver us from the Father ? Abhorred be the thought ! It was that He might bring us to the Father.

“The great work of Christ in effecting our deliverance was, as comprehensively predicted, *to magnify the law and make it honorable*. But where was His estimate of law to be produced ? Was there any need that the law should acquire superior esteem in the view of the Father ? Did He ever, under any circumstances, undervalue it ; or could He, by any transactions whatever, be induced to judge otherwise respecting its holiness and necessity than He had ever done ? Certainly not.

“In the minds of creatures alone could there be danger of dishonouring its requisitions and of rejecting its authority. Having by them been consumed and trampled on it was amongst them that it required to be raised to

due veneration and appropriate efficacy. In the Divine esteem the law was not more excellent after than before the Atonement, but by that amazing act, the esteem in which it was held in heaven shone down brightly on inferior minds, bringing many of them to behold and admire its glory. Instead, therefore, of the atonement having its effect upon the Father to change His purpose, it was a public declaration of what He is, the medium through which He revealed Himself, the exhibition of His righteousness in the very act of exercising forbearance and forgiving sin. Not less in this than in His other illustrious deeds, they who 'see the Son, see the Father also.' The love of Christ is equally the love of the Father."

Note G.

No part of the three lectures we are examining surpasses in extravagance of statement and weakness of reasoning that which treats of the Jewish Sacrifices. With regard to the *origin* of sacrifice "the evidence appears to Mr. Hincks to sustain the conclusion that it was human." Be it so. I have assigned in the preceding paper reasons which to my mind lead to the opposite conclusion. But as to the *Jewish* sacrifices in particular, *they* are of Divine appointment, if any weight is to be attached to the constantly recurring expression "And the Lord spake unto Moses."

With regard to the purpose of the Mosaic sacrifices Mr. Hincks views them as "a great ceremonial system by which the Jewish nation was secluded from an idolatrous world and kept apart as a witness to the one God."—*Lecture II.*, p. 8.

Now, far be it from me to maintain that this was not

one of the ends to be subserved by that economy, but it was by no means the chief, and still less the only one. Besides, there were sacrifices offered anterior to the existence of the Jews, as a nation. From whom were Abel's sacrifices to separate and seclude him? As has been pertinently observed by Faber, in his work on Expiatory Sacrifice, "Much, under the law, is said as to the *regulation* of sacrifice, and commands to this purpose are recorded with copious minuteness; but we are nowhere told, that under the law, the naked *rite* of sacrifice was first divinely instituted. Throughout the whole code of Moses its *previous existence* is assumed as a *substratum*. The law professes to do nothing more than *regulate* and *modify* a very ancient divine institution of patriarchism." p. 160.

Until therefore Mr. Hincks is prepared either on historical grounds to discredit the Ante-Mosaic sacrifices altogether, or to *show* that from the time they were incorporated in the splendid ceremonialism of the Jewish nation, their distinctive import was changed, we must regard his theory as to their merely separative purpose as an unsupported assumption. And the assumption is all the more glaring when viewed in the light of the fact that *there was scarcely ever a nation on the face of the earth in which the practice of sacrifice prevailed where the sacrifice was not of an expiatory character. Some offerings were Eucharistical, but others were as unquestionably Atoning.*

Mr. Hincks asks where in the Bible the typical character of the sacrifices is announced? "Where are we told that in the blood of bulls or of goats shed under the old Dispensation we are to see the Divine symbol of the great Redeemer's death?"—*Lecture II.*, pp. 7, 8.

I refer him at once to the epistle to the Hebrews in

which the relation of the two Dispensations is most fully and elaborately expounded. I presume from the fact that he has quoted this epistle without any reserve that he regards it as forming an integral part of the inspired canon. This circumstance is the more gratifying not only because it has been the fashion with many to deny its critical authority, but because I am now to cite one or two passages which seem conclusively to meet the challenge of my opponent.

In the commencement of the 10th chapter, the writer contrasts the sacrifices of the two Dispensations in the way of *shadow* and *substance*. "The law," says he, "having a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins."

Now here the writer of the epistle it will be seen expressly states that the Jewish sacrifices were "a *shadow* of good things to come." He says nothing at all about their object as secluding the people of God from other nations. They had no intrinsic worth or efficacy. They adumbrated something in the future and that something was *not to coexist with them, but was to abolish them*, nay, more, it was to abolish them by doing *that in reality* which they had only accomplished in figure or in symbol. It was to displace them by *becoming* that of which they had only been typical indications.

The same truth is vividly expressed in the 24th verse of the 9th chapter, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which *are the figures of the*

true, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us."

And again in the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th verses of the same chapter, the language of the writer might have been intended by its very precision and emphasis to set at rest the question between me and my opponent. "The Holy Ghost this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing, which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience: which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the Holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The observations of Bishop Butler on the very point raised by Mr. Hincks are eminently worthy of citation. "Christ is the Lamb of God, and as he voluntarily offered Himself up, He is throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews styled our High Priest. And, which seems of peculiar weight, He is described beforehand in the Old Testament under the same characters of a priest and an expiatory

victim. (Isaiah liii. ; Dan. ix. 24 ; Ps. cx. 4.) And whereas it is objected that all this is verily by way of allusion to the sacrifices of the Mosaic Law, the Apostle on the contrary affirms that 'the law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things,' and that the priests that offer gifts according to the law, serve unto 'the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle ;' 'For see,' saith he, 'that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount.' The *priesthood of Christ and the tabernacle in the mount were the originals* ; of the former of which the Levitical priesthood was a type, and of the latter the tabernacle made by Moses was a copy. *The doctrine of this epistle, then, plainly is, that the legal sacrifices were allusions to the great and final atonement to be made by this blood of Christ, and not that this was an allusion to those.* Nor can anything be more express and determinate than the following passage, 'It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when He cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering,' that is, of bulls and of goats, 'thou wouldest not, *but a body hast thou prepared me.* Lo ! I come to do thy will O God, by the which will we are sanctified *through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*'"

The reader will now be in a position to judge how far Mr. Hincks' theory of the purpose of the Jewish sacrifices accords with that of the New Testament, and how far his demand for evidence of their typical character has been met. Either he or the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews must be seriously at fault in the interpretation of the Old Dispensation. I venture to adhere to the latter. But lest Mr. Hincks should imagine that this epistle is the only

evidence we possess of the typical nature of the Jewish sacrifices, I must request his attention to those remarkable words of our Lord recorded in the gospel of St. Luke, chap. xxiv., v. 44. "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.'"

Now, it is manifest that our Saviour here finds Himself in the "law of Moses;" it is equally manifest that He finds Himself there as a *suffering* Saviour. It is incumbent on those who repudiate the typical import of the Levitical sacrifices to point out the precise passages in the "law of Moses" in which his death is so impressively foreshadowed as to justify the intensity of our Saviour's language "Thus it is written, and thus it *behoved* Christ to *suffer*." No misty generalization can be accepted in reply to this demand. A dying Immanuel is foretold in the "law of Moses." Mr. Hincks affirms that no presignification is found in the Levitical rites; on what passages then does our Saviour's declaration ground itself?

Note H.

Had the Mosaic sacrifices any reference to *moral guilt*?

Mr. Hincks answers this question in the negative. His language is "From the ritual sin, which was inevitable, the Hebrew faith provides a way of escape, but its atonement covered no sin that had its seat in the soul."—*Lecture II*, p. 9.

If, by the phrase "covered no sin that had its seat in the soul," Mr. Hincks means that the ancient sacrifices had no inherent expiatory value with regard to moral sin, I grant it at once ; but I am not aware of any writer who has maintained any such absurdity as that ceremonial offerings cleansed anything beside ceremonial sin. No such position is advocated in the paper against which my opponent has directed his polemic. I speak of the "symbolic mediation" of sacrifices in reference to moral transgressions, and I decline to accept the defence of any dogma which I have not avowed.

But the sacrifices which had no *intrinsic efficacy* towards the cleansing of moral guilt, might have a typical reference to the "one sacrifice" which was offered to take away all sin. And this reference they had. Mr. Hincks has formed very inadequate conceptions of the purpose of the whole ritual economy. He has failed to perceive that even the sacrifices, which were offered for the purpose of cleansing the most casual and inevitable defilements, (such as the touching of a dead body) were a grand system of pictorial teaching, designed to develop in the minds of the Jews lofty conceptions of the Divine Holiness, and of the corresponding necessity of Holiness in them. Bodily defilement was suggestive of spiritual defilement ; bodily purification was suggestive of spiritual purification ; and the necessity for expiation through means of blood in order to the forgiveness of ceremonial sin, was suggestive of the necessity of a higher expiation in order to the forgiveness of moral sin. This is the only interpretation which can rescue the whole Jewish dispensation from the charge of unmeaning cruelty.

Mr. Hincks speaks of moral sins as sins which "have their seat in the soul." Then surely *perjury* is a moral

sin, and yet sacrifices were offered for its expiation, and similarly for "*profane swearing*:" and if moral sins are not included in "*all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins*," which were confessed over the scape-goat, what language would suffice to teach this truth?

I know not what are my opponent's views as to the antiquity and authenticity of the book of Job, but in the first chapter striking evidence is furnished of the relation between sacrifice and moral sin, for the patriarch is represented as rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of his children, and saying, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their *hearts*." Surely this language denotes with sufficient explicitness that their "sin had its seat in the soul." The averment of Mr. Hincks that the sole purpose of the Levitical sacrifices was to purge away ceremonial defilement, is not only in direct issue with the facts just mentioned, but fails entirely to explain the object of the sacrifices anterior to Moses when *there was no ritualism which could be outraged by ceremonial transgression*.

But a more conclusive consideration remains to be produced. Mr. Hincks maintains that the Levitical sacrifices were appointed merely for the removal of "ritual guilt." This I deny. He further holds that such guilt they *did* remove. This, I accept; for I have nowhere hinted that they had not a ceremonial as well as a moral aspect. But the point I wish to place in a strong light is this, that Mr. Hincks expressly and repeatedly affirms that the "blood of bulls and of goats *did* take away all the sins contemplated by the Levitical economy:" the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, on the other hand, *as expressly*

affirms that they *did not*, and *could not*. In the 3rd verse of the tenth chapter he thus writes: "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance made of sins every year." In what sacrifices? In the Mosaic. Of what sins is there a remembrance made every year? Of *ceremonial*, says Mr. Hincks, which the sacrifices cleansed away; but the sacred writer exclaims, in the very next verse, with reference to these very sacrifices, that "*it is not possible* for them to take away sins." The sins then which they cannot take away, *must* be moral. The dilemma is inevitable. If the sins were *ceremonial* only, then *ceremonial sacrifices would cancel them*. Mr. Hincks holds that the sins *were* ceremonial, and that the ceremonial sacrifices *did* cancel them. But if the sins were *not* ceremonial merely, then ceremonial sacrifices would *not* cancel them. The writer to the Hebrews holds that the sins were *not* ceremonial merely, because ceremonial sacrifices *could* not cancel them. We cannot hesitate long as to which of the two writers is the more entitled to our credence.

Note I.

THE PRESENCE OF THE ELEMENT OF SUBSTITUTION IN
MANY OF THE CEREMONIAL SACRIFICES.

This note will be devoted to the establishment of the position that forgiveness, even of *ceremonial sins*, was made dependent on the offering of an expiatory sacrifice, and that in such sacrifice the whole fact of substitution is involved. It is a favorite Unitarian assumption that pardon of sin is not made conditional on anything but the penitent state of the sinner's heart. The following citations may suffice to show that whether the sins forgiven under the Mosaic dispensation were *ritual* only, or *moral as well*, pardon was suspended on the due oblation of a sacrifice. And if death

itself was frequently averted by such offerings, (and it was), then we have the very same God refusing to remit a penalty even for a *ritual* sin without a vicarious sacrifice, whom the Unitarians represent as forgiving *moral* sin without any corresponding condition whatever.

Let us take the case of the man that "eateth any manner of blood," as recorded in the 30th chapter of Exodus, "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among the people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

The exposition of this passage by Outram is clear and unanswerable. "Here," he says, "the blood which is said to make an atonement for the soul, denotes the blood of the victims; *and to make an atonement for the soul* is the same as to be a *ransom for the soul*. And to be a ransom for the soul is to avert death. This is evident from the following command: 'They shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, that there be no plague among them.' The word *plague* signifies a pestilence, attended with sudden death. We remark further, that to make an atonement for the soul is the same as to make an atonement for the life, for the word *soul* beyond all doubt here signifies the life. And what is it to make an atonement for the life but to preserve life by averting death? Who does not perceive that the expression itself clearly conveys this meaning, and rejects every other interpretation? Hence it follows that that punishment was *death*, and con-

sequently piacular victims might be said to suffer vicarious death as well as vicarious punishment."—*Outram on Sacrifice*, p. 270.

The only other instance I shall cite on this point is that of the scape-goat recorded in the 16th chapter of Leviticus. On the appointed day "the high priest having first presented a bullock as a sin-offering for himself and his house, took of the congregation two goats, upon which he cast the lots, and the lot determined which of the two should be offered, and which should be sent away alive. There being no individual for whom the first was peculiarly offered, the high priest himself presented and slew it; and then he took of the blood of both the bullock and the goat, and carried the blood into the holy of holies, the inmost recess of the temple, where stood the mercy-seat. . . . The blood which he carried with him he sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, and before the mercy-seat, and then he came out and sprinkled it as usual upon the altar. After he had thus by the blood of the one goat reconciled the holy place and the tabernacle, he laid both his hands upon the head of the other goat, called the scape-goat, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and '*all their transgressions in all their sins*,' putting them upon the head of the goat, and sent him away, thus bearing all their iniquities into the wilderness."

Here we have most copiously displayed the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice. By no fair process of criticism can the element of *substitution* be evaporated from this symbolic service. We have in the death of one scape-goat the *medium* of forgiveness, and in the sending away into the wilderness of the living goat we have the *emblematic* assurance that the sins are forgiven.

Let not the import of these and kindred sacrifices be overlooked. There was sin, there was forfeited life on the part of the sinner, there was a victim divinely appointed as a substitute for the sinner, there was the offering of this victim, and there was *forgiveness granted solely on the condition that the victim was offered. The forgiveness always comes after the Atonement, and is made conditional upon it.* Mr. Hincks may say the sins were only ceremonial. To my present argument it matters not. The God of the moral is the God of the ceremonial too, and we here have the God of the ceremonial refusing to pardon even ritual sins without a sacrifice, and seeing in the death of the victim a substitution for the death of the offender. The great Father of all men was the Father of the Jews, and yet such alone were the terms on which he consented in some cases to spare life itself. These are facts which Mr. Hincks will not deny—they are also facts which he cannot explain.

Note K.

Mr. Hincks challenges the production of a single passage from the gospels in which the Saviour says that his death "was a substitutionary sacrifice for sin."

But then he has provided himself with certain expedients of interpretation by means of which he can evade the obvious meaning of any scripture whatever. Is the Saviour's language quoted "I lay down my life *for the sheep*?" "Yes," Mr. Hincks rejoins, "but not *instead* of the sheep"—an observation designed to evacuate the preposition *ἐν* of its palpable meaning. But we cite another passage in which the preposition *ἀντὶ* is employed,—a preposition which is the strongest vocable in the Greek language for expressing the idea of *substitution*. Is

Archelaus said to reign in the room of Herod his father? *ἀντὶ* is the preposition used. In the question of our Lord "If he ask for a fish, will he for (or, instead of) a fish give him a serpent," we find the same preposition. Indeed, as my opponent well knows, "in the room of," "in place of," "instead of," are frequently the only English equivalents by which *ἀντὶ* can be rendered. How then does Mr. Hincks evade its meaning in the language of our Lord, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for (instead of) many?" This he says is "*figurative*." He first challenges the production of a passage in which the Saviour affirms his death to be "a substitutionary sacrifice for sin," and as soon as it is forthcoming, he contemptuously dismisses it as a figure.

If such be the method of criticism which Unitarianism commends and adopts, it is obvious that the Bible teaches nothing. The infidel, under the ingenious tuition of Mr. Hincks, may challenge the production of a single passage which affirms the existence of a God, and when he is reminded that the apostle Paul says "there is one God," he may bring forth his magic wand and wave the passage at once into the realm of figures. Indeed, this is a cheap method of clearing the Bible of every doctrine which does violence to our prejudices and prepossessions. I might here conclude this note, but I must request the attention of Mr. Hincks to the words of our Lord on the occasion of the last supper.

"This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the *remission of sins*." Matt. xxvi. 28.

Mr. Hincks will not deny that our Saviour's expression "shed for many for the remission of sins" refers to the

same act as is set forth in the words "to give His life a ransom for many." Here then we have the most unequivocal statement that "Christ shed His blood" and we have a statement equally unequivocal, that it was shed "in order to the remission of sins" (ἐἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν). And what is the remission of sins? The very word which is here employed is used in the Lord's prayer, and translated "*forgive*." Then Christ shed His blood "in order to the *forgiveness* of sin;" nothing is said *here* as to the removal of *sin* itself as a *moral stain*. *Forgiveness is the sole idea*. The conclusion therefore is inevitable, that if the "forgiveness of sins" comes to us through the shedding of our Saviour's blood, "His death was a substitutionary sacrifice for sin." *Guilt* was rendered *honourably pardonable by His death*.

Note L.

Mr. Hincks has failed to explain, on Unitarian principles, the scenes of Gethsemane and the Cross. He indulges in bitter criminations against myself, for having referred to these concluding sufferings of our Saviour's life for evidence of His substitutionary death. I can understand the spirit of such accusations. It is not natural for the rejector of any truth to look with complacency on the evidence which conclusively establishes it. But I must take the liberty of reminding Mr. Hincks, that he has not touched a single point raised in my paper in connexion with those awful scenes. No declamation, however impassioned, on his part, will answer the questions which I beg to put before him with all possible distinctness.

Did Christ die a martyr? The Unitarian makes no hesitation in giving an affirmative reply. He died as a martyr. Then if such be the nature of His death it is

surely legitimate to see how He anticipated and endured it. And what do we behold? Jubilance? No. Calmness? No. Unblenching fortitude? No. But these very qualities we have beheld in other martyrs, both men and women. The "sting of death is sin," but even sinful mortals have exulted through faith in Christ, in the prospect and the endurance of agonies which were *physically* more severe than those inflicted on the Saviour. The *sinless* one, then, was more dismayed in His last moments than those whose consciences have been burdened with the sense of transgression! Mr. Hincks is compelled to acknowledge this. I ask then again, how comes it to pass? He tells us that the agony of the garden is the "natural result of the struggle of His Spirit in view of His awful fate." But why should He be so distressed in view of "His awful fate" if that were merely a martyr's death, when (we repeat it) so many martyrs have "rejoiced to suffer" for "His name?" Whence comes this difference between a *sinless martyr* and a *sinful one* when it is *sin* that has a tendency to obscure the faith, and daunt the hope, and unnerve the fortitude of a man? We have in the one case a martyr who has nothing to dread, crushed by the prospect of his fate to the earth; we have in the other case a martyr who has sinned, and might well be supposed to have transient alarms in consequence of his past corruptions and guilt, hailing his fate with transport. If Christ were *only* a martyr this fearful disparity between his final scenes and those of hundreds in the records of Martyrology, must be accounted for. If Christ were but a man, and His death were but the death of a martyr, I have as much right to familiarize myself with the features of His death as with those of the death of any other martyr. Aye, more, I have

as much right to pronounce upon them too, and what Unitarian can with any show of consistency, having first reduced the death of Christ to the level of a martyrdom, come and seek to shield it from comparison with other martyrdoms. Such comparison is rendered not only legitimate, but inevitable by the impoverishing and degrading interpretation of the Unitarian, and I calmly repeat what I have before affirmed, that the death of Christ as a martyrdom is one of the least satisfactory in the annals of the world. And, so far from being an encouragement to virtue it is just the reverse, for it *proves that the deepest anguish* is reserved for the most innocent man. Mr. Hincks has not denied that the death of Christ contrasts disadvantageously with that of many of his followers. Nor can he deny it unless he introduce the element of vicarious sufferings to account for the agony and fear and sorrow with which Christ contemplates the atoning work He was so soon to accomplish. The mystery which claims solution at the hands of Mr. Hincks is, *the conjunction in one person of the intensest and most crushing anguish with perfect innocence, and this conjunction too, not a casual one, but appointed by the Father, for Christ calls the cup, "the cup which my Heavenly Father hath given me to drink."*

Well does Mr. Rogers in his third letter on the Atonement say, "And remember that if you insist on the injustice of God's inflicting suffering on Christ for the sins of others, you cannot escape similar difficulty, and greater in degree, on your own system; for can it be less unjust to inflict such sufferings on Christ *for no sins at all*. If it be unjust to accept Him as sacrifice for the guilty, how much *more* unjust must it be to insist on the sacrifice for

nothing, and when the victim thrice implored in agony that "if it were *possible*" the "*cup might pass from Him*."

Note M.

The manner in which Mr. Hincks deals with the language of the apostle Paul is not a little remarkable. He does not deny that his epistles abound in language of a sacrificial character, but he explains this fact upon the principle "that he was a Jew." But why was he a Jew? How did Judaism come into being? If Judaism had been like Buddhism, or Brahminism, or any other Paganism, an indigenous product of the human heart, then we could understand the reasoning which accounted for the use of certain terms by the fact that they were loose and general allusions to customs and rites belonging to the extinct or abandoned faiths. But Judaism was a Divine Religion. Its ceremonies were appointed by God. There was not a sacrifice which did not bear the seal of heaven. When, therefore, Mr. Hincks endeavours to account for the presence of sacrificial language in the epistles on the principle that the writers were Jews, he reasons to no purpose; for the ancient sacrifices themselves were not of Jewish invention, but of heavenly origin. The question is not whence came the sacrificial *language*, but whence came the *sacrifices*? Christ is not called a "sacrifice," because Judaism had its sacrifices; but Judaism had its sacrifices, because Christ *was to be* the great sacrifice. The language of the New Testament is not accommodated to the Old; but the services of the Old Testament are accommodated to the facts of the New. Such is the uniform teaching of Christ, and such is the uniform teaching of his apostles.

It will be interesting to the reader to see in what man-

ner Unitarians explain some of the most conclusively evangelical language of the apostle Paul. "He had to teach," says Mr. Hincks, "that under the Christian Dispensation all ritual disqualifications—all monopolies of spiritual privilege, were done away, and the favour of God was open to all, whether Jew or Gentile, on the same terms. This truth is the burthen of his leading epistles. And how does he present it? He falls back on his old faith for an illustration. Under the ritual system the sin offering removed the legal defilement; so under the new dispensation was Christ himself the great sacrifice for sin by His blood, (His death), abolishing for ever the disabilities of the Gentile, annulling the Law which was the very source of his disqualification, and thus admitting him to all the privileges of the people of God. Christ, the great sin-offering, had once for all, and for ever, cleared away the ceremonial sin of the Jews and the ritual disqualification of the Gentiles, and had reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross."—*Lecture III.*, p. 8.

Happily this interpretation of Paul's language admits of the most demonstrative reply. (1.) Mr. Hincks affirms, and rightly so, that "under the ritual system the sin-offering removed the legal defilement;" but he has somehow forgotten to reconcile this with his subsequent statement, that "Christ, the great sin-offering, had once for all, and for ever, cleared away the ceremonial sin of the Jews." If the ritual sin-offering had already removed the ritual sin, how comes it to pass that it required removing again? Nay, further, why did it need the death of a *man* to accomplish that which Mr. Hincks says had already been accomplished? If Mr. Hincks reply, that Christ did not clear away the very sins which had already been cleansed, but brought to

an end the old system of ritualism, which rendered possible the existence of *ceremonial sin*, we rejoin,—

(2.) That the apostle affirms again and again that Christ died for the *forgiveness* of sin, and not to destroy the *possibility* of ritual guilt. Now sin which has not been committed, cannot be forgiven. If ceremonial sin has not been committed, *it* cannot be forgiven. And if ceremonial sin were “cleared away” by the ritual sacrifices, there was none left for Christ to clear away. What, then, has the death of Christ done on behalf of the Jews? Simply nothing. It has not pardoned the ceremonial sins which Mr. Hincks declares were already done away by the accustomed sacrifices, and it has not furnished a ground for the pardon of moral sins; for Mr. Hincks reiterates in various language that the death of Christ has no bearing on the remission of moral guilt.

(3.) But, thirdly, on Mr. Hincks’ own theory that the death of Christ has cleared away the ceremonial sin of the Jews, I may take leave to enquire how it has accomplished this end. Why did not the death of Aaron or of Moses abolish it? Why did not the death of John the Baptist abolish it? And (what is still more to the purpose) why was the *death* of any one required to cleanse away a mere *ceremonial system*. The “veil of the temple was rent in twain” at the moment of the Saviour’s crucifixion—thus symbolizing the decess of the ancient dispensation. But why should a death, and *such* a death, be needed to put a period to a grand scheme of *ritualism*? And how did the one event accomplish the other? Judaism was established by *Divine precept*, why was it not abolished by *Divine interdict alone*? To these questions Mr. Hincks gives no reply.

(4.) But further :—We have seen the bearing which the hypothesis of my opponent has upon the Jew. We have seen that to him it brings no benefit whatever, either ceremonial or moral ; and now we must look at its bearing on the Gentile. In writing to the Ephesians, the apostle says, “In whom we have redemption through His blood *the forgiveness of sins.*” Then it appears the Gentiles had sins to be forgiven as well as the Jews. In the commencement of the 2nd chapter the apostle reminds them that they were once “*dead in trespasses and sins.*” And whatever these sins were, those who committed them had obtained *pardon* “through the blood of Christ.” Now it must here be carefully noticed that Mr. Hincks distinctly affirms (Lecture III., p. 17) that these sins were “not moral but *legal.*” But what legal “sins or trespasses” had the Gentiles committed? They had no Divine ritual. As they had no “ceremonial law,” they had neither with respect to such a law “done the things they ought not to have done, nor left undone the things they ought to have done.” The Bible assures us that “where there is no law, there is no transgression.” Mr. Hincks on the other hand charges the Gentiles with legal sins, when God had given them *no ceremonial to transgress. And these impossible sins against an unknown and unknowable law, Christ died to forgive!* And this is an *intelligent exposition of the language of Paul!!* I will not pursue this further, but shall quote the apostle’s own words in which he describes the trespasses and sins of which the Gentile Ephesians had obtained forgiveness through the death of Christ. The reader shall judge for himself how far these were *ceremonial* and how far *moral*. “And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins, *wherein in time past ye walked*

according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others." Are lusts of the flesh "legal sins?" Are "desires of the flesh and of the mind" "ceremonial disabilities?"

Note N.

MR. HINCKS' COMMENTARY ON ST. JOHN'S FIRST EPISTLE.

The following is a specimen of what my opponent considers fair criticism:—

"1 John iv. 10. 'The propitiation for our sins'—The propitiation is the *sin-offering*. And we have seen already how (according to St. Paul) Christ was the sin-offering which removed for ever the ritual disqualification of the Gentiles, and procured them admission amongst the chosen people of God. St. John, who wrote in all probability for the Gentile churches of Western Asia, employs the same figure to illustrate the same truth."—*Lecture III.*, p. 18.

Let the reader bear in mind that here Mr. Hincks considers Christ to be "the propitiation," because He has removed the ritual disqualification of the Gentiles. Here, then, is something tangible in the way of explanation. We know from these words, in the inspired dialect of John, what is the exact equivalent of the phrase "propitiation for our sins." Let the test then be applied. In the second chapter of the same epistle, John uses the same language—"And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

The question now arises, "What sins are here intended?"

Ritual disqualifications, says Mr. Hincks, or as he elsewhere terms them, "legal sins," though such sins were *absolutely impossible to the Gentiles who had no ceremonial law from heaven which they could violate*. But what does St. John himself say about these sins? We will quote the previous context. "This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we^c lie and do not the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, these things I write unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

The apostle here contrasts two things—light and darkness. God is light; that is, He is perfect holiness, and in Him there is no "*darkness*;" that is, there is "no sin" at all. "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, (i.e., in sin,) we lie, and do not the truth." "But if we walk in the light (in holiness) as He is in the light (holy) we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all sin*."

Here, surely, there can be no doubt as to what are the sins for which Christ is the propitiation. They are described as "*darkness*;" ceremonial sins are never thus characterized. A state of sin is a state of "darkness." A state of holiness

is a state of "light." If the darkness of which John speaks were ceremonial sin, then the light of which he speaks is ceremonial purity ; and then we have the apostle asserting with a blasphemous trifling, that God is light in the sense that He is "*ceremonially pure*." But, further, that nothing may be wanting to crown the absurdity of this Unitarian interpretation, we have the apostle exhorting the Christians, to whom he writes, not to commit ritual sin, (I write to you that ye sin not), when, in fact, ritual transgression was impossible.

And we have him represented as saying, If we confess our "*ritual disqualifications*," He is faithful and just to forgive us our "*ritual disqualifications*," and to cleanse us from all "*ritual unrighteousness*"! Who can imagine the heart-breaking sorrow with which these Gentiles would confess sins *they never committed*, and the extasy with which they would feel themselves cleansed from all "*ritual unrighteousness with which they were never stained*"!! And how sublime is the function Mr. Hincks assigns to our Lord, when he assures us that "if any man sin, (i.e. be under ritual disqualification, which he cannot help,) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous"!!! Is this the theme of the new song in Heaven? Surely the gratitude of the saints might find some nobler object to celebrate in their everlasting praises, than a redemption which has washed them from "*ritual disqualification*."

Note O.

The relation sustained by the Father to the sufferings of Christ, is worthy of a separate note. It serves the purpose of Unitarianism to throw a veil over this relation,

but the testimony it receives from Scripture is too uniform and explicit to be fairly evaded. The principles of interpretation which can succeed in twisting the following passages so as to give them any other meaning, than that which makes the Father the appointer of the sufferings of Christ, can play any tricks with language, and make it impossible for any being, Divine or human, to utter an unambiguous proposition.

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isaiah liii. 6, 10.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have eternal life—for God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." John iii. 14, 17.

"The cup which *my Father* hath given me, shall I not drink it.?" John xviii. 2.

"Oh! my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, *thy will be done.*" Matthew xxvi. 42.

"Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts ii. 23.

"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans v. 7. 8.

Passages such as these, which are capable of indefinite multiplication, cannot fairly be so impoverished as to render the death of Christ a mere casualty, so far as it relates to the direct and active agency of the Father: it was not an event which the Father contemplated with indifference. He did not hold himself in passive disconnexion from it. If the son "*came*," he was "*sent*." If he was a propitiation, it was because God had sent him forth, or "*preordained*," him. The death of Christ on the cross, was but the accomplishment in time of an eternal purpose in the bosom of the Father, and hence it was that thus "*it behoved him to suffer*." No words could more strikingly embody the truth that the Father is the fountain of mercy, and that in order to make that mercy available to us, he gave up his own Son to the death of the cross as the medium through which alone sinners could obtain equitable pardon. There may be mystery about the precise line at which the agency of the Father and that of the men who crucified the Lord meet; but whatever the mystery, the fact is unquestionable, that Christ, in his inconceivable agonies, was duly accomplishing the awful work which *the Father had given him to do*. If the death of Christ was not simply a contingency,—if it was not an event which the Father beheld with indifference,—if on the other hand it was preordained by the Father,—*and if at the very moment that the Father declined to remove unmerited infliction from his innocent Son, he was giving the highest display of his love for sinners*, the argument in favour of the fact of substitution attains the force of demonstration.

Note P.

WHAT IS MEANT BY "RIGHTEOUSNESS" OR "JUSTIFICATION"?

The following remarks of Mr. Hincks will suffice to put the reader in possession of his views as to the meaning of these words which are of such frequent occurrence in the New Testament.

"As to the word 'righteousness' (or justification), you must not put your own meaning into it, but endeavour to ascertain how the apostle used it. Nor is it difficult to do this. With him, to be justified was to be reconciled to God; to be brought into covenant with him, into a state of religious privilege, by the removal of all legal hinderances, and ceremonial disqualifications, and this work he connects with the *Death of Jesus*,—the great sin offering for the world. But my text* shows you that he distinguished this from *salvation*; and shows you also that with him salvation was something infinitely more important than mere redemption from penalty."—*Lecture III*, p. 10.

Again, Mr. Hincks gives us further light on the apostolic sense of the word "righteousness" or "justification" by informing us that it is "that state of religious privilege which the Hebrew nation regarded as its glorious birthright."—*Lecture III*, p. 10.

Is it not surprising that any one could so completely mistake the whole purpose of the Apostle's reasoning? Some unaccountable delusion must have seized upon the mind of my critic, or he would not have failed to see that if "justification" is simply that state of religious privilege

*Romans v. 10.

which the Hebrew nation enjoyed as its glorious birthright the Jews would not need to be "justified;" they were already, and had been, from the establishment of their theocratic polity, in covenant with God,—in "a state of religious privilege—reconciled to God;" and therefore, if "justification" be simply a term expressive of these external dispensational advantages, and if this be the sense in which Paul uses his own term, he will never fall into the absurdity of speaking of a Jew as needing justification equally with the Gentile. But he actually *does* insist on the necessity for justification *as much for the Jew as the Gentile*; for he says "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Galatians ii. 15, 16.

The interpretation which Mr. Hincks has given of the word "justification" is one, in support of which he cannot cite a solitary example from the whole range of Greek literature, Attic or Hellenistic. It is a pure and even ridiculous assertion to which, in common with some of his brethren, he has been driven, in order to escape the doctrine that we have freedom from *moral condemnation* through the death of Christ. And the necessity for "justification" both on the part of the Jews who *had* the ceremonial law, and on the part of the Gentiles who *had it not*, is grounded by the apostle Paul neither on ritual disqualifications, nor disabilities, but on the fact that all have sinned against *the Moral law*. That this is the case is capable of the most irrefragable proof. In the earlier

chapters of the Romans the apostle conducts a formal stringent argument on the doctrine of justification, its necessity, and its mode. And in the third chapter, in continuance of this argument, he says "we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin." Is it asked under what sin? We reply *moral sin*; for he thus proceeds "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God—they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit,—the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known; there is no fear of God before their eyes."

Not even the hardest Unitarian can deny that here we have a fearful portraiture of moral corruption. But such a concession saps the foundation of the whole system, for the apostle, after delineating the wickedness of the world, proceeds to argue *on the basis of this very wickedness*. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe,—for there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the

glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

Is it possible for any man who can understand the meaning of words, and who can follow, even for a moment, the most natural and easy train of reasoning, to miss the purport of this citation. It affirms that all are *sinners*; it affirms that, as being sinners, they cannot be justified by the deeds of the law; it affirms that for sinners, thus incapable of working out self-justification, another method of justification has been provided; it affirms that the method is one of grace through the redemption effected by the death of Christ as a propitiation; it affirms that by means of faith in this propitiation we obtain the remission of *moral sins*,—and it affirms that this remission of moral sins is "*justification*." I hesitate not to say that the supposition that the Apostle here speaks of ceremonial sins and of ceremonial justification, is in violation of all the acknowledged principles of interpretation. And in closing this note, and by way of warning Mr. Hincks against the evil I am condemning, let me beg to remind him that the word "*sinner*" ἁμαρτωλός never means a mere ceremonial transgressor, and that the word "*enemy*" ἐχθρός never means "out of covenant," and that the word "*sin*" ἁμαρτία in the New Testament never means "ritual disability"; and that all his arguments built on these glaring blunders have a less substantial foundation than even "castles in the air."

Note Q.

MEANING OF THE PHRASES "DIED FOR US,"—"FOR OUR SINS."

In the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, Christ is prophetically spoken of as "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." In the 4th chapter of the Romans, v. 25, he is said to have been delivered for our offences, (διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν). In the 1st Corinthians, chap. 15, v. 3, we find that "Christ died for our sins" (ὕπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν). In Galatians, chap. 1, v. 4, we read that He gave Himself for our sins, (περὶ or as some read ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν). In the 1st epistle of Peter, chap. 3, v. 18. it is said that "Christ also hath suffered for sin, the just for the unjust," (περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἑπαθὲς δικαίος ὑπὲρ ἀδίκων).

In all these passages whether the preposition be ὑπὲρ, περὶ, or διὰ, the meaning is substantially the same; *for, on account of, because of*. The observations of Dr. Leonard Woods on these expressions are worthy of citation.

"What instances, he asks, can be found in which dying for the sins of others, denotes, as the Unitarians pretend, dying as their example or simply for their improvement? When the prophet Ezekiel said, "The son shall not die for the iniquity of his Father," who ever supposed the meaning to be, the son "shall not die for the *reformation or benefit of the Father*?" We might just as well suppose that when it is said a man shall die for *his own iniquity*, the meaning is he shall *die for his own benefit*. When we say a man dies *for his own sins*, our meaning always is, that he dies *on account of his sins*; dies *because* he has committed an act of wickedness. Accordingly, when it is said that a man dies for the *sins of others*, the meaning must be that

he dies *on account of*, or in consequence of *their sins*; dies *because they have done wickedly*."—*Woods' Works*, Vol. II., p. 412.

There is another class of passages in which the Saviour is said to die, not for *the sins* but the sinners. Romans, ch. v. 6. "In due time Christ died for the ungodly, (*ὑπὲρ ἀσεβῶν*); and again, v. 8 (*ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*). In Luke, ch. xxii., v. 19, Christ speaks of Himself as giving His body "for you," (*ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν*); and in John, ch. x. 15, as "laying down His life, (*ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων*).

Now in these and similar passages there cannot be a reasonable doubt as to the force of the preposition *ὑπὲρ*. It is clearly equivalent to the preposition *ἀντὶ*, and expresses the idea of vicariousness, or substitution. It is by no means fully rendered by such phrases as "on our behalf," or "for our benefit." But I am willing to grant for the moment the modified and weakened interpretation. Be it so that "*for our benefit*" is the exacter equivalent to *ὑπὲρ*, than "*in our room*." The question presses for solution, What are the benefits we have received from *the death* of Christ which we should not have received apart from His death? Are there any? and if so, what are they? St. Peter says that Christ died the "just for the unjust," that He might bring us to God. This was *the purpose* for which He died. It has not been a merely contingent consequence. Before He gave Himself up to the death of the cross He saw that the world was alienated from God, and He died *in order that* (*ὥστε*) He might bring the "unjust" to God. The question claims a fair and dispassionate consideration—"Would the unjust have come to God without this death?" Leaving, for the present, out of account the point as to whether God could have honourably received

back a world of rebels without the sacrifice of His Son, as at once the expression of His mercy and holiness, would the unjust have "come to God," or have been "brought to God," without the death of Christ? If so, then "*it did not behove* Christ to suffer;" "the cup" might have passed from Him, and His mysterious and unfathomable woes were needless, because having no indispensable relation to *benefits which might be conferred without them*. The Saviour in this case suffered the "just for the unjust," in order to put them in possession of blessings that might come to them *through some other channel*. What then are we to think of the fact that the innocent was allowed to drink "the cup" which was not rendered necessary, either by His own sins (for He had none) or by the sins of others?

But, shall we suppose, on the other hand, that the death of Christ, the "just for the unjust," was indispensable as the means of bringing them to God? Would men have resisted every other moral magnetism but the cross? If so, then the doctrine of substitution at once appears; for if men were so alienated from God that the death of Christ was *necessary*, as an impressive spectacle, to fill their hearts with godly sorrow, we have the innocent suffering for the guilty, and *so suffering as to render their salvation possible*.

I must carry the argument even further still. Let the Unitarian deny, if he choose, that the death of Christ was designed to have any relation whatever either to the Divine moral law, or as an attractive influence on the human heart. Let him restrict its operation simply to the abolition of the Jewish ceremonialism, and to the placing on the same level Jew and Gentile, I ask is the abolition of that ceremonialism, with its consequent assimilation of Jewish

and Gentile privileges, a benefit? It is, replies the Unitarian. I ask further, Did Christ *design* to confer this benefit by His death? This was his purpose, says the Unitarian. I ask still further, "Could this purpose have been accomplished without his death? It either could, or it could not. If it *could*, then Christ was allowed to bear all the agony from which He prayed to be delivered, in order to abolish a mere ritualism which might have been abolished some other way. If it *could not*, then Christ's death was necessary, in order to the *existence and bestowment of the blessing*. The Father could not put the world in possession of the benefit of an extinct ceremonialism without the death of His Son! Here, then, we have the "innocent suffering for the guilty." We have the Father refusing to abolish a dispensation, and to remove certain inconveniences, disabilities, disqualifications, until his Son has poured out His soul unto death! To my present purpose it matters nothing whether the benefit conferred by the "one offering" on the cross is moral or ceremonial, or both. If there be any blessing whatever suspended by the Father on the death of Christ, and so suspended on it as to render that death *necessary in order to its bestowment upon men*, then the innocent suffers for the guilty. There are certain disabilities He declines to remove, certain privileges He declines to confer, except on condition that His own Son yield up His life. This is an inseparable consequence of the Unitarian position, and by no ingenuity can it be freed from the element of substitution, and that too in its most offensive form. The result bears no proportion to the expenditure. And it shocks all our conceptions of the Divine character to suppose that He sent His Son to die in order that we might be put in possession of certain external privileges.

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In closing this note, I beg to affirm that the vicarious character of the phrases "died for our sins," "died for us," cannot be consistently denied. And I require my opponent to produce a single passage from the Bible in which any one but the Saviour is said to have "died" either "for us" or "for our sins." There are martyrs in the Scriptures, of which of them are such phrases used? An apostle exclaims, with sorrowful indignation, "Was Paul crucified for you?" I press this point, nor shall I lightly suffer it to be evaded. If the death of Christ had no more to do in the way of bringing within our reach forgiveness and eternal life than the death of martyrs, why is it uniformly raised into conspicuous and unique pre-eminence? Not one of them is said to have "borne our sins;" not one of them is said to have given "his life a ransom;" not one of them is said to have "redeemed us from our sins by his blood;" not one of them is said to have "died the just for the unjust;" of not one of them is it said that "*through him*" we receive any blessing whatever, ceremonial or spiritual—and yet all these things are spoken of Christ, and of *His death*. These are facts, but they are solemn admonitions too, which I earnestly commend to the prayerful consideration of my opponent.

